LOOKING TOWARDS INDIA

A Study in East-West Contacts

by Miloslav Krása

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FOREWORD

Czechoslovakia, the land of heroes, is, indeed, a country of romance. Its people were among the leaders of Medieval Europe in culture – art, architecture, literature, music. They built their capital, Prague (Praha), on the green hills through which meanders the stream of the Vltava. The hills, the dales and the river with its quaint bridges make it one of the most beautiful cities of Europe. The fortified palaces with vast halls and turreted walls, the ancient basilica of St. George, St. Guy's cathedral and other churches, with wonderful stained-glass windows filling their interiors with polychrome light, and the dignified monuments and distinguished mausoleums scattered over the Old and Lesser Towns vest it with a strangely moving atmosphere of old-world mystery and modern elegance.

This country has experienced great vicissitudes of fortune. Surrounded by the Germans towards the west, the Hungarians in the south, the Poles in the north, and the Russians in the east, the land-locked country has had to fight for its existence through centuries. Its kings in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries extended their dominion over a large part of Europe, making Bohemia one of the foremost powers and one of the great centres of European culture.

From the Middle Ages on the Czechs have been strangely drawn towards India. Its literature and art, philosophy and religion have fascinated the Czech mind. The narrative which Dr. Krása has written demonstrates the close resemblance between the political fortunes of India and Czechoslovakia. Both share similar social problems of diversities of language and culture. They have suffered political domination as a result of their internal differences – India was for nearly two centuries the victim of British imperialist exploitation, as Czechoslovakia, was an appendage of Austro–Hungarian imperialism and Hitlerite tyranny. Czechoslovakia is a small

country, but its people are great – brave, freedom-loving, industrious, progressive. They have made great strides in the field of science, technology and the humanities.

It is a sociological puzzle why the people of Czechoslovakia, geographically so remote from India, ideologically occidental to their very roots and profoundly different from India's extreme orientalism, should have throughout the centuries felt attracted to India and its civilization. Does the Hegelian principle of mutuality of the thesis and the antithesis explain this? Possibly. Obviously, the curiosity of the West about the objective world has something to do with it, for its restless endeavour to explore the unknown draws it to the mysterious East wrapped up in its dreams, oblivious of the external world. Perhaps the lure of "golden Ind" of which Shakespeare and Milton sang. Perhaps India's fabulous wealth which inspired the voyages of discovery in the fifteenth century, its richly variegated luxury goods to obtain which Europeans have made sea and land voyages in the days of Alexander of Greece, the emperors of Rome, by the Crusaders of the Middle Ages, and the Venetians, roused and sustained the spirit of adventure. In any case Czechoslovakia has not remained behind the European quest for discovery.

Dr. Krása has traced in his monograph the history of this quest. He has shown how the Czechs gathered knowledge about India from ancient Greek treatises, books in European languages written in the early Middle Ages, e.g. the accounts of travellers like Marco Polo. During the Middle Ages many legends, stories and fables on India found their way into Czech literature. One of the most interesting among them was the story of Buddha's life, originally based upon Asvaghosa's *Buddhacharita* translated into Khotanese and ancient Uighur, thence absorbed into Manichaean literature where Christian

and Zoroastrian elements were added. It was rendered into Pahlavi, Arabic, Armenian and Greek, and then passed into other languages including Nestorian Syrian and Latin. Thomas of Štítné (died 1401), a Czech philosopher, put it into the Czech language. But a genuine and sustained effort to understand India began in the eighteenth century. A Czech Jesuit, P. Karel Přikryl, who lived for some time in Goa, wrote a grammar of the Konkani language.

When European scholars became interested in the Sanskrit language early in the nineteenth century and Sanskritic studies were enthusiastically undertaken in the West, comparative philosophy, comparative mythology and religion took birth. The professors of the University of Prague began their researches in Indology and published their articles in the journal *Krok* and other periodicals. For example the episode of Nala and Damayanti from the *Mahabharata* first appeared in Czech in 1851, and the drama of *Sakuntala* in 1873. Both of them were translated again, the first by the great scholar Lesný in 1924 and the second as a free adaptation by the poet František Hrubín in 1944.

Among the later Czech scholars a number have devoted themselves to Indian studies. One was Zubatý who translated Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra* and in collaboration with the poet Jaromír Borecký *Meghaduta*. There were several well known German Professors at the Prague University, e. g. Alfred Ludwig, the translator of the Rig–Veda, Moriz Winternitz and Otto Stein whose work in the Oriental Institute, Prague, and the University is deservedly famous in India and other countries. The history of Sanskrit literature by Winternitz is a classic.

But undoubtedly the most eminent Indologist in Czechoslovakia was Professor Vincenc Lesný (died 1953) who made notable contributions to Sanskritic and Prakritic studies. It

is more remarkable still that he rendered many works from modern Indian languages into Czech. His most wonderful achievement was the translation of the works of Rabindranath Tagore. His pupils O. Friš and P. Poucha have admirably furthered Indian studies in Czechoslovakia.

But Indology has not been confined to the exclusive purlieus of the academy. It has made entrance into the very core of the Czechoslovakian spirit, for the great masters of poetry, Jaroslav Vrchlický and Julius Zeyer, have sung of India "where the Ganga flows and the blue lotus blooms" as of a country where wisdom has its home. Vrchlický expressed his great admiration for India in his poems on Savitri, Buddha, Asokamala, the birth of Sakuntala and Visvamitra. Other poets have also chanted of Savitri, Damayanti and Sakuntala. The story of Buddha has greatly moved the Czech poets. India's mysteries have inspired Czech romances like *The Family of Jindra, My India, The Place on the Bank of the Ganga, Siva the Divine Dancer*, the *Ghatakarparam, The Song of Avasu* and *The Fakirs of Banaras*.

Dr. Krása has rendered invaluable service to the cause of Czechoslovak–Indian understanding and friendship by compiling this study on east–west contacts. India owes a debt of gratitude to him for his fascinating monograph. It ought to induce our scholars to undertake the study of the Czech language, the history of the Czechoslovak people and the rich treasures of their literature which need to be translated into the Indian languages.

New Delhi,
10th September, 1967 *Tara Chand*

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INTRODUCTORY WORDS

"I have often asked myself what, indeed, attracts us to India so much. Above all, there is Ancient Indian culture. Possibly some people are enchanted by that opaque veil of mystery and wonder, in which Europe long ago, but especially during the Age of Romanticism, shrouded India. But for us, Czechs, this ancient cultural country has yet another lure and attraction. It seems to me that a third link is constituted by the affinity between the soul of our people and that of a people who are linguistically and ethnically nearer to us, Slavs, than, say, to the Romance or Anglo-Saxon races, and whose thought is closer to ours, too.

"From this affinity has grown our interest in India, her culture and literature, religions, morals and customs, economic and political life, city and village life, and, last but not least, her fight for freedom."

With the above words Professor Vincenc Lesný, a leading Czechoslovak Indologist, introduced in November, 1948, the first postwar exhibition on India, held at the Náprstek Museum in Prague and aptly called "India in Czech Culture". Many of his fellow-countrymen, besides a host of Indians, have since asked themselves similar question. What are the sources of such a deep interest in India and Indian culture among the population of a small Central European country? Why are the Czechs and the Slovaks so receptive to Indian art? How can one account for such widespread and, as it were, self-evident fellow-feeling between members of nations so distant from each other?

There is certainly a good deal of truth in what Professor Lesný thought and sensed, but many aspects can be elucidated for us by glimpses into the past – both the most distant and the very recent. On more than one occasion has history mediated between the thought and literature of Ancient

India and Western culture, besides affording parallels between the destinies of India and Czechoslovakia during periods of these countries' lack of freedom and nationwide movements for independence.

The tradition of contacts between the two countries on the Euro-Asian continent can be traced far back, with a good record of encounters in the domain of cultural, economic and political affairs. Of course, due to the very nature of the stream of historical events, these contacts long remained one-sided. Centuries before an awareness of the existence of the Slav nations of the Czechs and the Slovaks emerged in India, Central Europe had been dreaming up a picture of fabulous India, a country lying somewhere at the world's end. For centuries this picture continued to be very unreal and dim, its indistinct outlines being only now and then illuminated by rays of true knowledge, from which gradually a mosaic of facts could be pieced together.

By retracing the long path travelled by our Czech and Slovak ancestors in discovering India, we shall be able to lay bare the roots from which the present relationships between the peoples of the two countries have grown.

1 HOW THE CZECHS AND THE SLOVAKS FIRST LEARNED ABOUT INDIA

As SOURCES of indirect information, three things symbolise the first contacts of the peoples of Central Europe with a land known by the name of India, a country from the very dawn of the historical period of Czechoslovakia surmised, rather than securely known, to lie somewhere out in the East, far away beyond the horizon, where the Sun rises. They were the following trio: Indian spices, the legacy of Ancient Greek and Roman literatures and the Bible.

If not earlier, then surely as early as the 9th and 10th centuries A. D., there existed both land and maritime trade routes from Asian markets to the Czech Lands (Bohemia and Moravia, today the western part of Czechoslovakia), along which precious goods from the East, including rare *Indian spices,* reached this country after long months of transportation, reloading and storage. Indian spices were brought to Europe by various passages across the Levant and possibly also through ports on the Baltic seacoast. Further, there were contacts with the Genoan colonies in the Black Sea region, to which Indian spices were also brought, via the Ukrainian town of Lwow. Import trade in Indian goods was the domain of foreign merchants. From the 12th century on, when trade in Eastern products began to concentrate in Venice, a leading position was gained by the merchants of Nuremberg, who were able to retain their advantage even some time after their Italian rivals had settled in Prague, the Czech capital. During subsequent centuries interest in Indian goods often stimulated a more broadly-based interest in the country itself.

The first real sources, from which Central European scholars drew information of India during the Middle Ages were, however, works by *writers of classical antiquity,* various compilations from the period of the decline of the Roman Empire and writings from the Byzantine period. Frequently such

works were wholly devoted to India or else contained passages on the country's history, natural conditions or on journeys along the basin of the River Indus and farther to the east. Among their authors' names we find those of Herodotus, Scylax of Caryanda, Ctesias, Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, Arrian, Cosmos Indicopleusthes and many others. They have seldom come down to us complete and in original versions but as fragments, later selections, quotations and paraphrases, preserving many eyewitness reports and items of reliable information, apart from a great many fabrications and fantastic tales. Some of these manuscripts found their way on to the territory of Czechoslovakia (e.g. works by Pomponius Mela, Paulus Venetus and others). At any rate, Czech men of learning had frequent opportunities to acquaint themselves with these writings on their journeys to other countries of Europe.

A few passages on India are to be found in the *Bible,* which began to be translated in Bohemia and Moravia as early as the 9th century. These are, above all, references to voyages by King Solomon's merchant ships from the Gulf of Aqabah to the shores of India and to Indian products imported by the Hebrews – an assortment ranging from war elephants to perfumes and scents. Although the known Old Czech translation of all the parts of the Bible was not completed until the reign of Charles IV (1346–1378), King of Bohemia and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Czech readers naturally had access to the original texts, in Latin or in other languages, before a translation into their own language was available.

The religious literature of medieval Bohemia contains interesting allusions to some legends current to this day among Christian believers in India. The first occurs in the manuscript of the Old Czech *Passional,* dating perhaps from the end of the 13th century: a prose tale of St. Bartholomew

and his missionary work in India. The second relates to the Apostle Thomas who, as legend has it, also came to India to preach the word of God. In a manuscript poem from the end of the 14th century, *Pravenie o božiem umučenie a jeho svaté krvi prolitie* (The Relation of the Passion of God and the Shedding of His Holy Blood), the author begs the "King of the whole world" to strengthen him in his faith and save him from sin and ends by reminding him that he should do better than St. Thomas in the hour of his trial, who resisted the Lord's commandment by refusing to set out on a journey to India.

Old Czech renderings of the theme of the exploits of Alexander the Great enjoyed tremendous popularity with the reading public. For the most part they were based on a historical treatise by Q. Rufus Curtius and on a fantastic Greek romance, the *pseudo-Callisthenes*, in a version considerably modified by adapters at the beginning of the present millennium. Two Czech *Alexandreids*, both by anonymous writers, were circulated in many manuscript copies containing long passages on India. The first, a versified translation, dates from about the end of the 13th century and surpasses its models by its conception, topicality of adaptation, original variants and overall literary merit. It is regarded as one of the most notable works, not only in Czech but in contemporary European literature, which continued to be read extensively until the Hussite Wars (early 15th century – see chronological table on p. 139). Readers, or rather listeners, learnt about India in the second half of the poem, narrating the story of the invasion, by Alexander's army, of the territory governed by Indian rulers, of Alexander's struggles with King Porus (the historical ruler of the Punjab kingdom of the Pauravas), the storming of the fortified town of the Sudrakas (the historical tribe of Malavas, with whom the Ksu-

drakas were allied) and so forth. And, most interesting for Czech audiences, four Czech knights, of course purely fictitious, by the names of Jan, Mladota, Radota and Radvan, took the journey to India in the ranks of Alexander's army. As India appeared to be so very distant and inaccessible, the quartet went to it, at least in the poet's imagination, to enable Czech audiences to experience with them the vicissitudes of their adventurous peregrination.

The other Old Czech romance of Alexander, written in prose at the close of the 14th century, also contains many references to India. The work originated as a translation from the Latin version of the so-called pseudo-Callisthenes and abounds with fantastic notions, which stubbornly persevered throughout the Middle Ages, obscuring the picture of India in the West. Thus readers encountered basilisks and other fabulous beasts, six-armed dryads, a diamond mountain and a wondrous wood, where sacred sun and moon trees foretell the future with human voices. A sun tree is described as talking to Alexander and prophesying, first in "Indian" and then in Greek, that he would be poisoned and would never see his country again. The same theme occurs in another manuscript, probably from the 15th century, dated, however, by the Czech chronicler Václav Hájek of Libočany (died 1553) to the middle of the 14th century. This is a Latin forgery of a *Record by Alexander for the Slavs,* in which the ruler of Macedonia is characterised as a "talker with the brahmins and sun and moon trees". This spurious manuscript, which even has a Czech title in the extant copy, was also extensively read.

The spread of exotic ideas was assisted by various episodes about India found in popular legends and chivalric tales introducing to Central Europe Breton and East Gothic themes, both in original versions and in Czech translation. Such

episodes can be found, for instance, in *Parsifal* by Wolfram von Eschenbach (beginning of the 13th century), a tale of the adventures of Feirefiz and his father in India, and in various versified romances. Outstanding among these is the legend *About Ernest*, whose Czech version seems to have originated in the 13th century. The following brief summary of an "Indian" episode from the work suffices to illustrate how far the narrative was removed from reality.

On their voyage to the Holy Land, the Swabian duke Ernest and his entourage land in a country called Cypra, where they find a beautiful but deserted castle. While Ernest, accompanied by a friend, is walking through rows of empty rooms, the inhabitants of the castle suddenly return, leaving the two wanderers barely enough time to conceal themselves. From their hiding place they witness a terrible spectacle: the castle's occupants, pagan monsters with long, birdlike necks and beaks instead of noses, drag in a beautiful maiden, the daughter of the King of India. The bird-men had captured her after overpowering and slaughtering her father the King, the Queen, the princes and the entire escort, just then returning to their Indian kingdom. Although the Indian maiden with golden hair is half dead with terror, the pagan ruler courts her and, after a sumptuous feast, has her brought to his bed-chamber. Ernest and his companion hasten to her aid, valiantly combat the creatures and succeed in killing the chief. However, by the time they manage to hew their way to the lovely princess's side, she has been almost pecked to death by the bird-men, who thought that the Indian army had just arrived to free her. The dying girl then tells Ernest the story of her kidnapping and promises him, as a reward, the crown of her country. In the end she dies, while Ernest and his friend have barely enough strength left to fight their way back to the ship.

Another Indian *belle* is the heroine of a – this time happily ending – story of one of the knights of King Arthur's round table. It was introduced into Czech literature by an unknown translator, apparently in the 14th century, under the title *Tandarias and Floribella,* and was probably based on a romance by the Austrian poet Pleier. At Whitsuntide, the court of King Arthur is visited by Floribella, an Indian princess, who arrives riding on a camel, escorted by nine lovely maidens. She describes herself as the orphaned daughter of a mighty Indian ruler and asks King Arthur for protection. The King courteously takes her under his wing and appoints Tandarias, a young page, to serve her as a valet. Shortly afterwards, the two young people fall in love and flee from King Arthur's court to the country of Tandarias's father. Their marriage and the placation of King Arthur climax a long tale of struggles, tournaments and adventures.

As can be seen, the first reports about and allusions to India appeared fairly early and can be found even in the oldest works of Czech literature. On the other hand, it is obvious that the picture of India they suggested was grossly distorted by prejudice, the narrow bounds of dogmatic religious thinking and the tradition of diverse fantastic descriptions, whose origins can be detected early in Antiquity. This picture of India was not brought closer to reality by the first attempts at encyclopaedic works, which were in evidence in Europe from as early as the 12th century. The first known manuscript of such an "elucidarium" in Czech originated in the first half of the 15th century, and in the following centuries, after the art of printing had reached maturity in Central Europe, these popular "knowall" compendia attained their greatest currency. Apart from items of information, pardonable in view of the state and extent of medieval learning – for instance statements that the name of India was derived

from that of the River Indus rising in the Caucasus and flowing into the Red Sea, or that pepper-growing regions were infested with snakes and lizards, which, when pepper ripens, have to be driven away by great fires, this allegedly explaining why the spice appears to be so shrunken and black – the oldest Czech *Lucidář* sets forth many fabrications as absurd as only medieval imagination could have made them.

And so readers were expected to believe seriously that India was inhabited by giants twelve ells tall with the front parts of their bodies looking like lions', with feathers and hooves on their feet; that there lived people with heels at the front and toes at the back of their feet, with eighteen toes and seventeen fingers; that some had only one eye, while others had dogs' heads and horns in their foreheads. And all these breeds had been created by the Lord and separated from one another by waters, rivers, mountains and deserts lest they should mingle.

It is hard to belive how slowly more reliable information on India and the Asian continent in general gained ground in Western writing and how long notions about the wonders of the East survived. Obviously they must have struck deep roots and must have been well attuned to prevailing ways of thinking. The path to a more truthful image of India led both through a renewal of direct contacts and opportunities for first-hand observation and through rational thinking, discovering the laws of nature and a systematic study of the Earth's topography. Credit for this latter approach is due to the Arabs, who followed up the tradition initiated by Greek and Roman geographers centuries before. Thanks to Arab scholars, Spain experienced a revival of interest in the geography of the eastern hemisphere, a knowledge of which was not slow in spreading through other countries of Europe. The 13th century witnessed attempts to penetrate into the

unknown parts of Asia, prompted both by religious reasons and by a desire for more knowledge of these countries and for direct contacts with them. They were no longer crusades aimed at delivering Jerusalem from Muslim hands, but political-religious missions inspired by the Popes and pilgrimages by monks for missionary purposes or commercial exploration.

But even then it frequently occurred that sober reports about journeys to the East met with less interest than mere half-truths and fabrications pandering to people's craving after the incredible and the adventurous. On the other hand it is equally true that even realistic accounts by travellers of a distant country, whose conditions greatly differed from those of Europe, sometimes struck listeners as so improbable as to be taken for inventions and exaggerations. The rebirth of European interest in the East and, in particular, in India, is also reflected in Czech writings of the day.

2 A CHANGING IMAGE OF INDIA

THE REVIVAL of interest in India was stimulated by a legend about the empire of the Christian ruler John, which had been gaining currency throughout Europe from as early as the 12th century and proved exceptionally long-lived. This was one of the greatest mystifications recorded in history, but it is a fact that in the years following upon heavy defeats sustained by crusading expeditions, both the Catholic Church and feudal lords readily succumbed to illusions about a Christian kingdom in faraway India, in which they wishfully saw an ally in their struggle against the Turks. This attitude probably explains why "The Letter from Prester John" to the Pope and certain European heads of state, a work of an unknown mystifier from 1165, was taken at its face value. Its contents spread like wildfire, penetrated into travelogues and were even amplified by the addition of more details and exotic elements. Pope Alexander III did not hesitate to send a reply to the letter. Understandably, it remained unanswered, but the idea of a Christian empire in India lived on, inspiring ever new legends and prophecies. It reached medieval Bohemia, too, where manuscript copies of Prester John's Letter and of replies by the King of France had been preserved and where, after the stormy period of the Hussite revolutionary movement, an original tract known as *Hvězdářství krále Jana, kněze Velké Indie* (The Astronomy of King John, the Priest of Great India) was written by an unknown author. The work deserves notice as it dates the beginning of King John's rule to the commencement of the Christian era. Moreover, it bears out a belief then rife in Bohemia that John's kingdom was really located in India (contrary to some other views identifying it with certain Tartar khanates and even Christian Ethiopia).

More valuable information was supplied by Europeans who actually visited the countries of South Asia in the course

Odoricus Boemus
of Pordenone

of their global travels. Their reports were, it is true, incomplete, frequently inaccurate and biassed, but rarely marred by wilful distortion. One of the first authors of travel books on India was Odoricus Boemus of Pordenone (? 1286–1331). It is a curious historical coincidence that this Franciscan monk was evidently of Bohemian origin. Most probably he was the son of a Czech soldier stationed in Pordenone (Forum Iulii) in Italy, serving in a garrison posted there by the Czech king Přemysl Otakar II, who ruled the territory in 1269–76. Oldřich (Odoricus), a self-styled Czech (Boemus), gained valuable experience during his first journey to Central Asia and Mongolia, where he learned some eastern languages. He later visited India in the course of his great eastern tour, on which he had set out some time between 1314 and 1318, with the aim of establishing contacts between Persia and China. Having experienced many hardships, he returned home in poor health. Nevertheless, he found time to dictate his *Memories* before death overtook him.

During his fourteen years' sojourn in Asia, Oldřich spent only a short time in India (after 1321), while journeying from Persia to East Asia. After visiting Thanna, he sailed along the Malabar Coast, calling at some ports on the southernmost tip of India, then probably sailing to Ceylon, penetrating into the territory of what is today Madras State, thence proceeding via the Andaman Islands to Sumatra, Java and South China. Oldřich's travel book, known as *Itinerarius Orientalis* (Oriental Itinerary) or *Iter in Indiam* (Journey to India), was copied in many transcripts and translated into a number of languages, including Italian, French, English and German, and published in many printed editions from 1513 onwards. The manuscript records religious customs and ways in which Indian deities were worshipped, on the whole unexaggerated accounts are given of fakirs, peni-

tents, the burning of widows *(sati)* and the Hindu "Chariot Procession" *(Ratha Jatra)*. Realising the importance of Indian spices for the European market, Oldřich left us an interesting description of the art of pepper-growing. His account points to the key position of the Sultanate of Delhi, whose rulers were in his time still able to maintain political power in the peripheral provinces.

The Czech reading public found more information on India in the Czech version of the work of Oldřich's precursor, the famous traveller Marco Polo (1254–1342). In the nineties of the 13th century he, too, sailed along the southern and western shores of India, visiting some coastal regions and assembling a wealth of remarkable geographical data, besides recording many facts about Indian trade, customs and political conditions, which testify to his exceptional power of observation. Marco Polo's *Million* was undoubtedly known to Central Europeans as early as the 12th century and was rendered into Czech by an anonymous translator at Letovice in Moravia around 1400. The Czech version thus became the first translation into a Slavonic language. As it was based on a fuller version than later transcripts, it is considerably more extensive than the other known variants. About 20 pages of Marco Polo's travelogue are devoted to India.

The very translation of *Million* is a reflection of a budding desire for more knowledge and wider horizons. Although it still had to contend with superstitions and medieval infatuation with fantastic tales, it is nevertheless symptomatic of the social changes then taking place. In the domain of education and culture we witness the penetration of Czech into religious literature and, on the whole, an increasing popularity of Czech writing. Interest in the distant countries of Asia and foreign countries in general, in different customs

and other people's culture, then became a permanent feature of the Czech and Slovak cultural orientation.

By strange coincidence the third major work by a European, setting forth authentic information about India, was conceived in Prague, the Czech metropolis. In 1338, Giovanni de Marignolli, a bishop and the last of the papal legates, was despatched on a mission to the court of the Great Khan in Peking. On the return journey he sailed along the coast of India and reached Avignon (France) in 1353. The following year, King and Emperor Charles IV invited him to Prague and appointed him as his court chaplain, besides commissioning him to write a chronicle of the Kingdom of Bohemia, certainly a very exacting task. Marignolli set about his work with a mind still full of fresh impressions from his travels. This explains why his *Cronica Boemorum* reads more like a chronicle of the world, containing, as it does, many geographical descriptions and observations of Oriental countries.

As can be concluded from different references, the author visited the western coast of the southern part of India and the region of Madras. On the whole, his report seems to be reliable. Marignolli does not indulge in sensational fabrications, he is a sober and discreet narrator and one of the first writers to have corrected notions about monstrous human and animal beings inhabiting India. He, too, notices pepper-growing, mentions tribes living in the forests of the interior of the country and ways in which they exchanged the products of their hunting, reports about Buddhist monks and so forth. Marignolli's *Cronica Boemorum* was thus the first work to give detailed information on the history of both India and Czechoslovakia, although its main value was that as a travel book it did much to extend medieval knowledge of the eastern world.

The sober, matter-of-fact tone of travel passages in Marignolli's chronicle compares very favourably with the style of another "travelogue", the many transcripts (and later printed editions) of which flooded Europe during a half-millenium. *Mandeville's Travels* was a piece of medieval mystification, whose popularity long overshadowed more serious information about India. This compilation, made up from works of diverse ancient and medieval writers, was passed off by its author as an original travel book by an English knight from St. Albans, who allegedly experienced many adventures in the years 1322–56, while journeying in Africa and Asia. It was not until the end of the 19th century that it was proved a forgery (attributed either to Jean de Bourgoigne, physician, or to a diocesan official, Jean d'Outremeuse, both of whom lived at Liège). Whoever he was, the compiler must have been extremely well read and an excellent narrator, with an unbridled imagination. His book was a medieval bestseller.

The first Czech translation was made at the latest at the beginning of the 15th century by Master Vavřinec of Březová, a well known chronicler of the Hussite Movement, his aim being "... that the Czechs, too, should know that which is described herein". Yet the picture of India, which readers found in the travelogue, surpassed earlier fantasies.

Based on a store of nonsensical fables, accumulated over the centuries and amplified by the author's own inventions, the book again presented Asia as a continent of incredible occurrences, the most curious customs and fantastically deformed people. It seems that the description of India surpasses that of any other country discussed in Mandeville's Travels where elements of sheer fantasy are concerned.

Books by Marco Polo, Odoricus Boemus, Marignolli and "Mandeville" were the chief sources of the knowledge of

India in medieval Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia before the Hussite Wars. As far as we know, descriptions of journeys to India, undertaken during the 15th century by the German Johann Schiltberger, the Italian Nicolo de Conti or the Russian merchant Afanasy Nikitin, met with no direct response among the Czechs and Slovaks.

When the great voyages of discovery ushered in the period of colonial exploits, the existing state of affairs was bound to change radically. For a long time to come relations between the Orient and the Occident, were to remain confined to aggressive wars, economic exploitation and political domination of conquered territories. After Vasco da Gama's first successful voyage, India attracted all sorts of expeditions, which saw her as an object for piracy and conquest. A country which had throughout its history successfully resisted repeated attacks from the mainland was now, for the first time, exposed to naval raids in the nature of an onslaught waged by one foreign power after another in uninterrupted succession. India entered a period of colonial exploitation.

For the Czech and Slovak people, too, the 16th and 17th centuries were a fateful period. The mighty upsurge of and the disastrous schism within the Hussite Movement were followed by prolonged struggles between the feudal nobility and the burghers, which, together with religious differences, gravely weakened the country's internal unity. The Czech throne was disputed by members of the Hungarian, Polish and Austrian ruling dynasties. The union of the Czech Lands (Bohemia and Moravia), Hungary (of which Slovakia was a part) and Austria under Habsburg rule in 1526 laid the foundations of a multinational Austro-Hungarian monarchy and paved the way to the defeat of the Bohemian Estates at the Battle of the White Mountain (1620), to the sufferings of the Thirty Years' War and three centuries of foreign rule

and national oppression (1620–1918). Nevertheless, the Hussite period had seen a rebirth of cultural life, increased prestige of the Czech language, democratisation of education and literature. The two centuries preceding the Battle of the White Mountain witnessed a gradual spread of education accompanied by widening interest in other parts of the world, whose limits had been considerably expanded as a result of the voyages of discovery. From the beginning of the 16th century onwards, the art of printing was a major force on Czechoslovak territory, while the spread of information about overseas countries was also assisted by the more frequent journeyings of nobles and, mainly, burghers, some of whom visited Africa and Asia. Another source of information was newspapers, which appeared at first irregularly and from 1597 on, periodically.

Echoes of works by medieval travellers and of the Indian version of the legend of King John's Christian empire can be detected in *Manuálník M. Václava Korandy* (The Manual of M. Václav Koranda, 1424–1519), a codex of diverse official documents compiled by the head of the Prague Utraquist Consistory, brought up to about 1500. It advances interesting arguments to support the contention that Rome had only a limited significance in the religious world because a Christian empire was alleged to exist in India, where primitive Christianity had survived pure and intact, unspoilt by the medieval Roman Church.

On the other hand, one of the first examples of writings, in which Czech readers found reference to India in entirely practical contexts, is the translation of a treatise by Guglielmo da Saliceto, a famed Italian physician, who used chemical substances for therapeutic purposes as early as the 13th century, besides interesting himself in surgical methods. The Czech manuscript translation of *Saličetova ranná lékař-*

stvi (Saliceto's Treatment of Wounds) contains descriptions of many Indian herbs and spices used by European physicians.

The first extant records in chronicles pertaining to passages of Gipsy nomads also date from the beginning of the 15th century, but it seems probable that – in the course of their centuries-long migration to the west – Gipsies had arrived in territories inhabited by the Czechs and the Slovaks even earlier. Sometimes myth mingled with reality, as, for instance, at a show staged for Emperor Maximilian II's guests on 26th February 1570 in Prague's Old Town Square. In the words of a contemporary chronicler "... a live and huge Elephant, the like of which had never been seen in these parts before, was brought into the public place, and on that elephant was seated Porus, King of India, clad in royal garments and holding in his hand a sceptre, the royal crosier. The aforesaid Elephant was believed by many to have knelt down before the Emperor and the Empress as they were issuing forth from the house of the gentlemen of the Trček family, but to other princes, also present, it did not pay such respects."

So far sources have shed no light on a more significant issue: the relationship between the Czech and Slovak milieu and the first voyages of discovery from West European ports to East India. Let us mention at least that a printer by the name of Fernandez Valentin Moravus, living at Lisbon, was appointed by the king as a commercial representative in 1503, and, as recorded in old manuscripts, was possibly of Moravian origin. He published in Lisbon a collection of old travelogues including Marco Polo's *Million*, an account of travels by Nicolo de Conti and a letter by Hieronim di San Stefano about his voyage to Cairo and India from 1496 to 1499. Later Fernandez Moravus copied various accounts of travels and writings on contemporary voyages, which have

been preserved in his manuscript collection to this day. Yet it is impossible to produce conclusive evidence of a direct connection between Fernandez Valentin "de la provincia de Moravia" and the historical Czech Lands.

Recently, Professor J. V. Polišenský, of Charles University, and P. Ratkoš, a Slovak historian, made a notable discovery in Bratislava, the Slovak metropolis: they identified a scroll of manuscripts containing fragments of an anonymous *Description of a Voyage to India in the Year 1502*, supplements on the results of the voyage, data on the economic importance of some of the places visited, navigational data and a survey of Portuguese voyages to India between 1497

The first known depiction of the Gipsies, in Central Europe, 1552

and 1517, as well as a description of a journey to India made in 1517 by a certain Lazarus Nuremberger. From a historical viewpoint, the most interesting item is the account by an unknown participant in Vasco da Gama's second expedition to India, which adds quite a lot to our knowledge of that voyage.

Interest in overseas countries and, above all, in "both Indias" – East and West – was reflected in the great demand for cosmographic works. Contemporary maps were far from perfect, but there is a marked difference in the quality of 16th-century maps of South Asia and one of the first Czech maps of India, found in a circular picture of the World

in the *World Chronicle* by Vavřinec of Brezová, a 15th-century drawing (based on an older, so called Hereford map). The greatest popularity was enjoyed by Münster's monumental *Cosmographia,* which appeared in Prague in 1554, a short time after its publication in Germany. It was a veritable mine of information on world geography, ethnography and history, both ancient and recent, presenting a compendium of contemporary knowledge of India. A special edition of a Cosmography by J. Honter was published in Prague in 1595 by Martin Bacháček of Nauměřice (1538 – 1612).

Another popular work was *Customs, Laws, Regulations and Habits of All Nations*, written by a Bavarian author, Johann Boehme (Boemius) Aubanus, at the beginning of the 16th century, translated into Czech by Jan Mirotický of Kroměříž and published at Olomouc (Moravia) in 1579. The reader is immediately struck by the fact that pride of place is accorded to "Asia and the more noble nations of that part of the World", a total of nearly nine pages being devoted to India. Let us describe the work briefly.

India is presented as a country at the "very extremity of Asia", with fertile soil and an abundance of all plants and products, mainly cinnamon, pepper, sweet calamus, ebony, also pearls and gems. The Indians are reported to be frugal eaters and fond of ornaments. As they trust one another in business transactions, they have no need of laws, seals and testimonies. The only law recognised by the "Brahmanic Nation" is never to violate the "natural law". Women meet men not out of lust but out of a desire for children. Seven estates are mentioned (among which it is possible to discern four Indian *varnas*). Our interest is aroused by a passage on the estate of the ploughmen, whom no one wrongs since all need their work, and by a reference to paper money. The King

India as depicted in a map
in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*

is said to be attended upon by bought women. Lest treacherous attempts should be plotted against him, the monarch changes his bed every hour during the night. This rather confused, yet on the whole sympathetic, account of India contains, for the first time in Czech writing, allusions to certain specific features of Hindu society, such as self-torture practised by the *sadhus* and the burning of widows *(sati)*. Auban's work also reiterates some of the earlier fabrications and contains direct reference to Megasthenes's fables. Readers are, however, warned not to take these too seriously. In this respects the book markedly differes from the uncritical attitudes of many earlier and later writings on India.

Knowledge of India was greatly advanced by the publishing activities of Daniel Adam of Veleslavín (1546–99), a Prague humanist scholar. He was responsible for the publication of some original and translated works with passages on various Indian topics. Veleslavín's *Politia Historica* (Historical Polities, Prague, 1584) states, inter alia, that "the Old Indians... knew nothing of usury and were, therefore, so happy as to successfully resist, well-nigh alone, Roman power." Indian geographical, zoological and botanical terms are assembled in *Nomenclator Quadrilinguis Bohemicolatinograecogermanicus* (Tetralingual Nomenclature in Czech, Latin, Greek and German), while information about the Indian flora was provided by a beautifully illustrated Czech edition of Mattioli's *Herbář a Bylinář* (Herbarium). The book states the places of origin of many imported plants. Readers are instructed that ginger is not the root of the pepper plant, as many apparently believed, but a different species also grown in India whence it is brought to Bohemia.

During the 16th century, the import of Indian spices to Europe again increased considerably. The merchants of Nuremberg now had goods shipped to the ports of Lisbon

The beginning of the chapter
on India in Zikmund of Puchov's Czech version
of Münster's *Cosmographia*, 1554

Kniha od Stwoření Swěta.

O Indij.

Kniha před Narozením Krystowým.

cayské. Mezy těmito Hoccota Kán měl mnoho Dětij/z nichžto nejstarssij Gino Kán/po Otcy w Králowstwij Katcyském Panowal. Jeden pak geho Bratr/brál se do Zemij Zapadnijch/a obsáhl Země Persiau/Turkwestau/Seythyám/a některé přitom Kragijny gine. A Bardo bratr gij nij podmanil Země Puolnočnij/a bera se do Europy/přitáhl až k Zemi Uherské/a splodil Tamerlána/kterýž welmi těžce ztrápil a saužil Azygi/a Země Puolnočnij/y giné Kragijny některé. A když Gino Kán gsa w mladém wěku umřel/a Mango přijbuzný geho Cýsařstwij wzal/A ten chtěge na některé Ostrowy sáhnauti/Kterýž na wýchod ležal/a byl mu se spretiwil/někteří ij těch Ostrowu tegně se pod Wodu spustili/a z wrtawsse pospodku Essiff/nanemž byl Kán weliký/s wsemi kteřij přemien byli/tu Lodj potopili. Tehdy mýsto neho wčiněn gt Kánem welikým Cobila bratr geho/ Ktehoz Markus Paulus Kublar gine nuge/Kterýž také Wýru w Pana nasseho Gežijsse Krysta přigal. Ale potomcy ge opowrhsse/Wijru Krystowau/přistaupili k Sektě Machometowé.

Protož se z toho spatřuge/yak Země Tatarská na mnoho Králowstwij pro swau welikost/a množstwij Obywatelůw swých byla rozdělena. Paulus Benátský na počátku swých Kněh pijsse/Když wzal předse Cestu na Wýchod k welikému Kánowi/přissel do Konstantýnopole/a odtud po Moře Euxinské do Armenye/z Armenye chtěge pak dále gijti/upadl w nebezpečenstwij žiwota swého/a to pro dwa Tatarská Cýsaře: Tenž Barka a Allau kteřij spolu Bogowali/musyl zas naspátek gijti/a Cestu začatau k Persygi wynechati/Kdež poněkud musyl y pobyti rc.

O Indyj kteraž k Europie blijže leží / před řekau řečenau Ganges .:.

PRwnj Indya a kteraž blijže k nám leží / za- 21
wjrá se welikými dwiema Řekami / gedna Indus gméno má / od kteréž Indya slowe / druhá Ganges. Od Země pak Tatarské a od giných Pulnočnjch Kragin / djlj se skrz Horu gednu welikau a dlauhau welmi řečenu Taurus / Kteráž se w Pamffiligi počjná / a gde předce

and Antwerp. It was only later that they were ousted from their position by their Italian rivals, who settled in Prague. Bohemia was conspicuous for her great consumption of spices. Thus, about 1500, cronicler Butzbach recorded that "a Bohemian pig eats more saffron during a year than a German man during his whole lifetime." Interest in spices and other Eastern products was also evidenced by a book by a well-known Czech nobleman, Kryštof Harant of Polžice and Bezdružice (1564–1621), narrating his journey to the East and published in 1608. Although the author never seriously contemplated a journey to India, he devoted great attention to the country in his travelogue. Harant's *Putování, aneb cesta z království Českého do města Benátek: odtud po moři do země svaté, země judské a dále do Egypta* (Journey from the Kingdom of Bohemia to Venice and Thence by Sea to Palestine, to Judaea and Further to Egypt) is unparalleled in Old Czech literature for enumerations of goods imported from India to Europe. A special list of about 30 Indian products known in Bohemia is given. The population of India is described as consisting of noble nations who, with the exception of Alexander the Great, "... were never subdued by a foreign king or monarch ... so that it is not known whether, since the beginning of the world, there has ever existed another nation which has so laudably defended and kept up its freedom and order as these Indians have". The writer contradicts the view that guns were invented in 14th-century Europe, reminding his readers that the Indians had used them in war a thousand years before. When the Portuguese came to India they found hundreds of guns there, some of them so big that a hundred oxen had to be yoked together to pull one such field-piece. Thanks to its value as a source of information, Harant's book long ranked among the most successful travelogues by Czech authors.

In 1610 a voluminous work by H. Buenting, *Itinerarium sacrae scripturae* (Itinerations of the Holy Scriptures), appeared in Czech in Prague. The book contains an original map of the world, with Asia depicted in the shape of a Pegasus, and an account of voyages by King Solomon's ships to India. With this work we are about to wind up our survey of this category of reports. There remains a somewhat later book by Jiří Plachý–Ferus (1585–1655), a Prague Jesuit, librarian and prefect, which appeared under the title *The Catholic Map or the Conversion of the Nations of the Whole World . . . to a Knowledge of the Holy Catholic Faith,* but its value as a source of information on India is very dubious. Plachý discusses the various realms of India from the narrow points of view of the spread of the Catholic faith, his approach being, moreover, purely imaginative. His main "source" is a fictitious book in the Chaldean language, allegedly found on the Malabar shore. According to the book, St. Thomas founded eight archbishoprics in India, of which only six are known (including one in China). The work is typical of the Catholic counter-reformation movement in Bohemia. Even as regards knowledge of India, it is evidence that the defeat of the Bohemian Estates at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 put an end to the promising development of Czech humanist literature, which found its greatest writer in Jan Ámos Komenský-Comenius (1592–1670), The Teacher of Nations, author of a monumental work written in exile. His pedagogic and didactic writings give factual information on some realities of India and Indian life, rivers, worship of idols, script and so forth. A number of Comenius's manuscript marginal notes relating to India have been discovered. It is also known that a translation of his *Gate of Tongues* into the "Mogol language", that is, probably into Urdu, was contemplated or even begun. Yet for a long time the

3 ECHOES OF A DISTANT CULTURE

"In those days when monks and hermits began to grow in numbers and their generosity spread throughout the world, and many were in India (who had left everything and had betaken themselves to monasteries in the wilderness, so that, being in this mortal life, they could lead an angelic life) there was a mighty king by the name of Avenir, of the most comely countenance."

THE ABOVE are the opening lines of the tale of Barlaam and Josaphat, a freely paraphrased romance by Thomas Štítný (? 1331–1401), a religious and social reformer, telling of the conversion to Christianity of Josaphat, an Indian prince, by Barlaam, a hermit. This work introduced into Old Czech literature an Old Indian theme in a truly classical adaptation of a Buddhist legend. Without doubt, Štítný was the greatest Old Czech writer, and his *Barlaam and Josaphat* ranks among the best productions of that period.

This was the first time that ideas of early Buddhism and minor themes from Indian literature reached the West on a large scale. Modern literary historical research has already explained fairly satisfactorily from what sources and by what channels elements of the ancient Indian legend of Buddha and other episodic parables of Indian origin passed into the tale of Barlaam and Josaphat.

It is probable that this romance was known to Czech educated men as early as the 13th century from translations into other European languages. Štítný's version, based on a Latin model originated at the end of the 14th century. It was long considered to be a work by an anonymous author. Long before its Czech version was written, the Buddhist legend in Christian guise had become part of the European religious tradition. The characters of Barlaam and Josaphat were even included by the Venetian author Pietro de Natali (? 1330 to

propagation of his ideas was confined to the Protestant world. A Dark Age descended on his country after the Battle of the White Mountain, and it was not until many generations later that the doors were again opened wide to knowledge of India. By then, however, interest had shifted to entirely different domains.

But let us return for a moment to the past and let us try to trace the emergence in Czech literature of themes which distantly yet distinctly echoed Indian thought and literary culture.

1406) in his *Catalogus Sanctorum* (Catalogue of Saints) as historical figures, and found a place in *Legenda aurea* (The Golden Legend), a famous collection of lives of Catholic saints. And, incredible though it may seem today, on August 7, 1672, the allegedly "genuine" relics of both saints were brought from Venice via Portugal to Antwerp to be deposited in the Monastery of St. Salvator. Thus the centuries-old literary pilgrimage of Bodhisattva–Josaphat to the West temporarily ended in the gallery of Catholic saints. It was not until the 19th century that the first objections were raised to the infiltration of the Christian faith by Buddhist elements. Gaston Paris, a distinguished French literary historian, expressed the view that "... the Church has enough saints and can, without regret, afford to strike off her hagiographical register this strange and heinous impostor who obtained a place on it under the name of St. Joasaf or Josaphat."

After Buddhism had long been abandoning its positions in India, Marco Polo became acquainted with the Buddhist legend on his visit to Ceylon and incorporated a part of it, which also appears in *Barlaam and Josaphat*, into his travelogue, but it did not become known to Czech readers at the time as the Czech translator of *Million* used a version of the famous travelogue from which it had been deleted. It is the story of Siddhartha's birth, the signs and prophecies preceding it and of how the young prince acquainted himself, despite his father's prohibition, with human misery, suffering and old age. Alongside other themes, well-evidenced in the Pali canon and other collections, there appears in the sacred romance of Prince Josaphat a parable of the king who sent the Bugleman of Death to his brother's house, of the talking bird and the three precepts he gave to men, of the two mice and the unicorn, of the three friends of whom one only was true, of subjects who sent their king into exile after a year's

rule, a wealthy lad who married a poor but wise girl and of the beautiful maidens and ladies who tempted Prince Josaphat.

The last theme, the temptation of a king's son, was elaborated upon in a somewhat different form by Johlín of Vodňany in the Zderazy Monastery. In his variant the prince was educated for ten years in utter darkness before being allowed to come out into the open to see for himself what the world was like. His royal guides showed him various things, teaching him their names. When he saw some young women, he was told by his informers that they were demons beguiling people. When later the king conversed with his son, he asked him what he liked best of all the things he had seen. "The demons who beguile people," answered the young prince. Johlín adds: "Oh, how frail is human nature and how easily it can fail!"

The above mentioned Vavřinec of Březová (? 1370–1436) is the author of a dream-book, extremely popular in its time and originally called *Kniby snového vykládáni* (Books on the Interpretation of Dreams). In the preface we find an interesting reference to the wisdom of the ancient Indians. The dream-book had been so conceived as to enable the ruler to learn the "certitude of future things" through the interpretation of dream-parables. Master Vavřinec states that, in his efforts to arrive at the correct method of explaining dreams, he found out what Indian sages had thought about the matter. In a shorter chapter entitled "The Wisdom of Indian Sages and the Art of Dream Interpretation" he quotes the opinions of an interpreter of the Indian Emperor's dreams, whom he calls Amarthan. Among other things, he warns against identical interpretations of identical dreams in people of different sex, status, or office, as "... the same dream has a different meaning in a man, a woman, a king or prince or

lord or commoner; a different meaning in a sober man or a drunk, in summer or in winter . . .". This approach certainly seems to reflect the Indian authors' sense of differentiation and classification.

The narrative *O sedmi mudrcích,* (The Seven Sages), is probably also of Indian origin. It was first read in Bohemia and Moravia in the Old Czech version of *Gesta Romanorum* (Deeds of the Romans), a popular collection of tales from the last decade of the 14th century, of which it was part. In 1502 the collection was printed at Plzeň (Pilsen, western Bohemia), while some stories were published in separate editions and even dramatised. More distant Oriental, and possibly Indian, echoes – transmitted through Byzantine and Arab literatures – can be found in several European variants of "parliaments of animals". In Old Czech writing the idea of humans in animal guise occurs in the moral poetical allegory *Nová Rada* (The New Council), a work from the end of the 14th century, written by Smil Flaška of Pardubice (1349–1403), a statesman and writer. Indirect Eastern influences can also be assumed to have inspired an anonymous *Council of Animals* from the beginning of the 16th century. One of the older manuscripts of *The New Council* contains – unrelated to the text – an engraving of an elephant bearing a rider's "wooden cabin". The *Council of Animals* has a whole passage on war elephants, altogether a very remarkable analogy of descriptions of the Indian art of warfare. The *Council of Animals* was again published in the 17th and 18th centuries, and motives from it reappeared even in certain modern poems written in the last century.

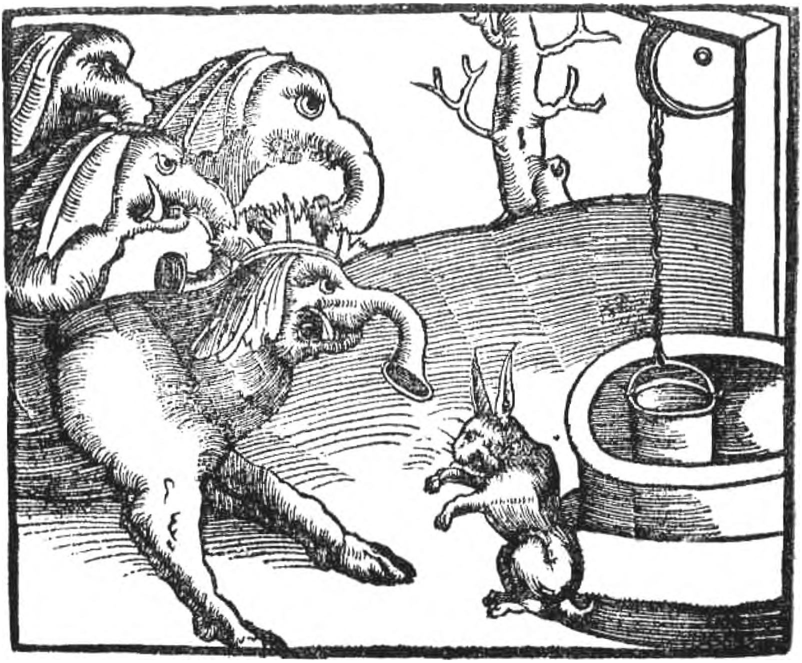
No discussion of the infiltration of Western culture by Indian elements can fail to note possible parallels of Buddhist themes in Christian canonical *Evangels.* The most plausible example seems to be the legend of the old man Simeon

of Jerusalem. This episode strikes us as a very close analogy of the Buddhist story of old Asitah, which also appears in the chapter on the birth of Prince Josaphat in Thomas Štítný's book. Later apocryphal evangels contain quite undoubted traces of Buddhist influences.

European literature, however, drew upon yet another, immensely rich compendium of Ancient Indian thought and popular wisdom, the five books of the *Panchatantra*, a Sanskrit collection of prose fables interspersed with versified aphorisms and counsels, a work attributed to the brahmanic sage Vishnusharma. It originated some time during the early centuries of the Christian era. By the middle of the 6th century, it had become so well known outside India that Khusrau Anosharvan, the rule of Persia, had it translated into Pahlavi. The Old Syrian version was completed in 570, ushering in a series of translations, which brought a knowledge of the Panchatantra, through a Greek version, to Europe during the 11th century. But parts of the work could have become known in Europe even ealier in the form of some Aesopian fables. In successive translations, a key role was played by the Arabic, in which the collection appeared for the first time under the title *Kalila and Dimna,* the corrupted names of two jackals, the leading animal characters of the first book of the Panchatantra. The Arab text served as the basis for the Latin rendering which, in turn, became the model of the Czech version.

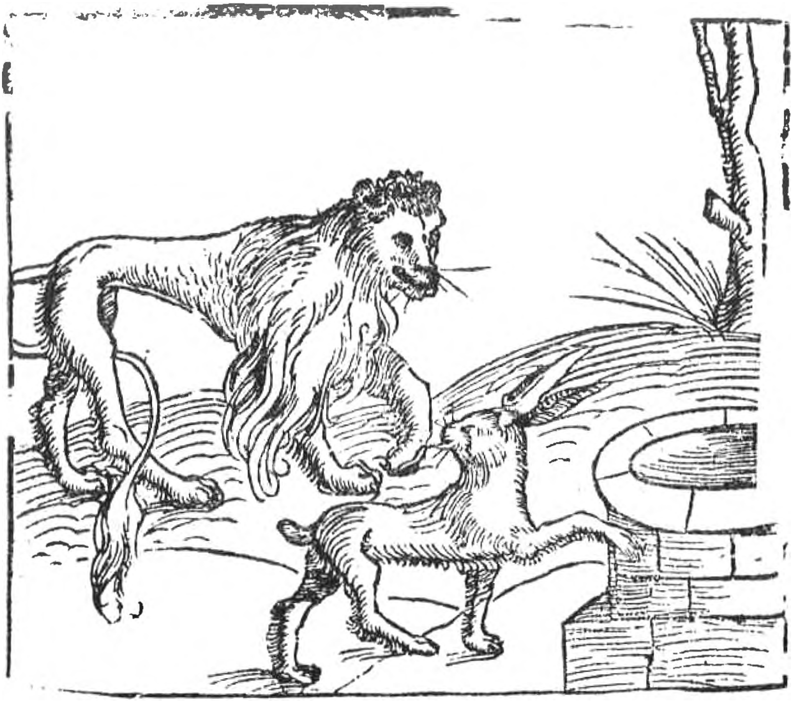
The Old Czech translation dating from 1528 is the work of a deputy judge and outstanding propagator of moral-didactic literature and humanist ideas, Mikuláš Konáč of Hodiškov (died 1546). This was not a case of the publication of an anonymous original, it being explained in the extensive subtitle from where and by what means the fables, *Pravidlo lidského života* (The Rule of Human Life), had arrived in

Illustrations from the first Czech edition
of *Panchatantra*,
a work by Mikuláš of Hodiškov, 1528



Bohemia: "... and they were first written down in the Indian language, then in the Persian and later the Arabic, then in the Jewish and at last turned from the Jewish into the Latin." The Czech edition, with a lengthy introduction by the translator, acquaints the reader with the Indian theme taken from three different sources. First, there is the text of the Panchatantra (the author's name, given as Bidpai in the Arabic version, may be a pseudonym) into which undoubtedly many stories were incorporated from older tradition and popular hearsay. Another source was an older Sanskrit work on the science of the state and politics, *Kautiliya arthashastra* (traditionally attributed to a Minister of Chandragupta, founder of the Maurya empire, a Taxilan brahmin

known as Chanakya or Kautilya) but preserved in a form of later origin. This classical work of Indian political science followed the same aim as that which the author of the Panchatantra pursued in a light and entertaining form; and so it is not surprising that he sometimes quoted from this older work word for word. The third source was a narrative which first appeared in a Pahlavi version and had been borrowed from it in other translations; it was about the Persian physician Burzoe (in Konáč's version Beroziáš), who was sent by King Khusrau to India with orders to bring back the famous collection of fables. After a long sojourn the physician finally finds an Indian friend, with whose help he obtains the books, copies them out in secret and brings them to his



country. Konáč's text gives the story of a physician who, in vain, searches in India for plants miraculously restoring life, until he is instructed by Indian sages that they can only be found in learned books, which alone have the power to awaken man to new, true life. The many engravings accompanying the printed book, for the most part copied from the Latin edition with only minor changes of detail, are not without interest either; they show how "European" was the picture of India among Europeans in those days and how little they knew of Indian life and nature; thus, for instance, a mongoose is represented as a dog.

At the beginning of the Renaissance period in Central

Thomas Štítný among his children.
Drawing from a manuscript dated 1376.

The hermit Barlaam and Prince Josaphat.
Illustration from a 15th-century manuscript.

Europe, Konáč's translation was very popular reading. Although the stories had an alien background and belonged to a different period, they were not read for entertainment and pleasure alone. Old Indian wisdom was understood by the Czech reader, while many of the parables touched upon problems which were not without topicality in Bohemia. It is true that Konáč, a patriotic humanist, did not yet stand entirely on Renaissance ground, but the very choice of the collection may have been inspired by a breath of the new age. It is no accident that the end of the 15th century also saw the first Czech edition of Aesop's Fables.

The two Czech books on Indian themes – *Barlaam and Josaphat* and *The Rule of Human Life* – were not forgotten, and were brought out in many editions during the following centuries. *Barlaam and Josaphat* was printed several times during the 16th century and was even dramatised: after the Battle of the White Mountain, the central theme of the romance – the conversion of the Indian prince, and with him of the whole Indian realm, to the Christian faith – was grist to the mills of the counter-reformation drive throughout the country. Records have come down to us of more than 30 performances of the play given at Jesuit schools in Prague and other Bohemian, Moravian and Slovak cities. Certain episodes were made into plays by Jesuit authors, for instance *About the King of One Year, About Three Friends* and *About the Unicorn.* Thus we witness a paradoxical situation: an originally Buddhist theme in a Christian adaptation shares in furthering Catholicism and suppressing religious freedom in Central Europe. Moreover, according to a report by Balthazar da Costa, from 1653, another dramatic adaptation of an Indian theme, staged by Portuguese Jesuits in Tanjore and recited in Tamil, was used for the purposes of spreading Christianity in Buddha's India herself.

Indian fables from the Panchatantra were also frequently published during later periods and widely commented upon. About the middle of the 19th century, the collection was published by F. Třebovský under the title by which the tales are known in this country to this day: *Bajky Bidpajovy* (Bidpai's Fables). The year 1881 saw the publication in Prague of A. J. Vrťátko's version of *The Monkey and the Crocodile or Let No Man Be His Wife's Slave.* In 1887 E. Kovář published in Moravia his *Indian Fables from the Collection of Wise Counsels (Hitopadésas).* All these translations were instrumental in keeping alive the tradition of both works of Indian origin, which have retained their places in contemporary Czechoslovak translated literature as well. The most recent editions were brought out only a few years ago. A critical edition of *Barlaam and Josaphat* was produced in 1946; a new Czech version of *Bidpai's Fables* arranged by the well-known author Ivan Olbracht was published in 1956, followed by another adaptation written by M. Voříšková in 1965, and a new, careful translation from the Arabic into the Slovak was made in 1958 by L. Drozdík, an Oriental scholar from Bratislava.

4 FROM THE CZECH LANDS TO INDIAN SHORES

THE DEFEAT at the Battle of the White Mountain marked the beginning of the Dark Age in Czechoslovak history, a period of political subjection, merciless religious persecution, a deep economic and cultural decline. During the prolonged fighting of the Thirty Years' War, the armies of the warring powers clashed several times in the Bohemian Basin and on Moravian territory, the country was almost incessantly exposed to plundering by foreign mercenary troops. The Habsburgs' hatred of Hussite traditions and of the reformation ideology of the rising bourgeoisie expelled abroad thousands of families from among the best educated classes. The war and mass emigration reduced the population by a half, while people of town and country were forcibly reconverted to Catholicism. The Government policy of counter-reformation and stamping out the still living legacy of Hussitism found its chief ally and support in the Jesuit Order, which reached the peak of its activity during the 17th and the first half of the 18th century.

Members of the Order soon penetrated into the entire educational system, becoming firmly entrenched in Colleges, seminaries, aristocratic boarding-schools and universities and bringing practically the whole education of young generations under their control. Czech men of learning were bred in an atmosphere of religious intolerance. Although Jesuit education won relative success in the course of time and produced many scholars with a wide outlook, thinking for a long time bore the stamp of Church dogmatism. The efforts of entire generations were needed before enlightened and patriotic individuals could emerge, many still adhering to the Catholic faith and even belonging to the Jesuit Order, men who helped to pave the way for the Czech National Revival at the close of the 18th century.

The Jesuit Order entered history during the initial stage

of colonial expansion and was thus able to intervene effectively not only in the counter-reformation drive in Europe, but to take a hand in missionary work in the newly discovered and occupied overseas territories. Missionaries were at first recruited exclusively in Portuguese and Spanish provinces but, as further territories were colonised, the need for more priests to carry out missionary work was urgently felt. From the last third of the 17th century on, missionaries from Central Europe, too, were sent to America and Asia, including members of the Bohemian Province of the Jesuit Order. Detailed reports by Jesuits serving in distant parts of the world were an important source of information. Reports continued to arrive at regular intervals for over two centuries; they were eagerly awaited and generous selections appeared in printed form. In this way accounts reached Czech and Slovak readers, providing them with new information on India. Thus, for instance, reports by Jesuit missionaries, acting as envoys to the Mughal Emperor at the end of the 16th century, supplied Europe with practically the first detailed information about the Empire of the Great Mughals. Many letters stimulated interest in trade with India and in Indian produce.

About 30 missionary stations existed at that time in India, mainly along her western coast and in the south, more than one-third being located deep in the country's interior. Consequently, reports by missionaries covered a vast area and shed valuable light on regions formerly unknown to Europeans. In the Czech Lands the best known selection of letters by Jesuits was published in Stöcklein's, and his successors', bulky *Der neue Weltbott* (The New World Messenger) from 1726 to 1758. Nor were *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (Instructive and Curious Letters) unknown, having appeared in print from 1762 to 1776. An older collection of letters,

published by Maffei in 1588 at Venice under the title *Selectarum epistolarum ex Indiam libri IV* (Four Books of Selected Letters from India), was also known, as were several other such compendia. It seems that the popularity of these publications with Czech readers derived from their ability to satisfy the long-subdued interest in Eastern countries and a desire for widening horizons. At the suggestion of the liberal, freedom-loving historian and philologist, F. M. Pelcl (1734 and 1801), author of a book on Czech, Moravian and Silesian scholars and writers from among members of the Jesuit Order, at least some missionaries' letters were published in Czech translation by J. B. Dlabač (1758–1820), a patriotic canon of the Premonstratensian Monastery in Prague.

Many missionaries from Bohemia were active in India, some of them of German origin. The first to leave on an Indian mission was W. P. Kirwitzer (1588–1626), a professor of mathematics from Kadaň (northern Bohemia), who was called upon for work in Goa as early as 1616, which was certainly an exception. In 1620 his work on observations of comets in East India was published under the title *Observationes cometarum anni 1618 factae a Nostris in India Orientali*. It was not until 1708 that another Jesuit from Bohemia, K. Mattern (1661–1721), arrived in India to work as a physician and pharmacist. Many Czechs spent short terms in Goa while journeying to more distant parts of East Asia. In 1737, Jan Siebert, Jan Gruber and Václav Paleček stayed here for short spells, as did J. X. Walter (1708–1759), an excellent musician from Bílina, who has left us an interesting account of political conditions on the western coast of India. Walter was accompanied on his journey by Jáchym Jakeš, who had an appointment as professor of theology in Ambalacada. Karel Slamenský was active in Goa until 1746, when he left for Cochin China. A year later, J. Mautner (? 1730–

1761), of Olomouc, left for India, but died later during a voyage when Jesuits were deported to Portugal following upon the abolition of their Order. On the other hand Vilém Obstcírer (1716–1758), a Czech from Škvorec near Český Brod, spent many years in India. This former grammar school teacher and preacher at Stará Boleslav came to India in 1749 in the company of his friend Karel Přikryl, taught theology and later became dean of a faculty of the Jesuit College in Goa.

Among writings by Czech missionaries, some of whom helped to propagate knowledge of India in their home country or have left us valuable source material for the study of certain periods in Indian history, the work of the above-mentioned Karel Přikryl stands out. His quite exceptional talent as a philologist and his interest in Indian languages even stimulated, although indirectly, but far from insignificantly, the bourgeoning scientific and cultural life in Bohemia during the period of what is known as the Czech National Revival.

Karel Přikryl (1718–1785) was a native of Prague. After philological studies he taught at the grammar schools of Brno and Jičín, later went to Prague to read theology, and left for India in 1748. In Goa he held the post of Professor of Theology at the Jesuit College. When in 1759 the Jesuit Order was abolished in Portugal and her colonies, he was interned, deported along with other Jesuits to Lisbon in 1760 and imprisoned in the nearby Fortress of St. Julian. After six years in jail, thanks to an intervention by Empress Maria Theresa, he was released (1767) and allowed to return to Bohemia. Until the abolition of the Jesuit Order in Bohemia, he taught at Jesuit schools at Jičín and Hradec Králové, where he spent the remaining years of his life in an episcopal seminary.

Přikryl wrote many letters, grammatical treatises and text-

books, the majority being connected with India. His stay in Goa resulted in a collection of letters describing "the community, the College and the port of Goa", "Oriental morals", and "correcting the erros of many experts," entitled *Epistolae, quibus civitas, collegium et portus Goani, mores Orientalium describuntur et errores plurium, qui in hac materia versati sunt, deleguntur.* On the strength of its historical interest the work was proposed for publication by Pelcl, but the project was never realised as, apparently, the manuscript got lost. On the other hand, Přikryl's letter from prison (1766) was frequently published (it gives an account of the author's deportation from India). His yearly reports from Goa have been preserved in archives in Rome, but are still awaiting publication.

Of Přikryl's other manuscripts, a single folio has been preserved in the National Museum (Prague), containing very valuable information on the grammar of modern Indian languages. *Principia linguae brahmanicae* is a grammar of Konkani written in Latin and notable for its systematic presentation.* Přikryl's fragment of Tamil grammar, remained unnoticed until 1955, when it was subjected to the first expert analysis by Kamil Zvelebil, a Czech Indologist. And this manuscript folio provided, probably shortly after Přikryl's death, a strong stimulus to scholarly interest in India.

Some time before May 1791 the Grammar of Konkani got into the hands of J. Dobrovský (1753–1829), who instantly perceived striking affinities between the grammatical structure and vocabulary of Konkani and those of the Slav languages. It was thus through Přikryl's work that the greatest Czech scholar of the day, and one of the first to

* The grammar was published in 1968 in *Archiv orientální* (Oriental Archives), Prague, thanks to José Pereira, an Indian scholar, in a careful and well commented edition.

revive literary Czech, made his first contacts with Indian languages. He immediately became deeply interested in Sanskrit and demonstrated its many affinities with the Slavonic family of languages. His work set the tone for many Czech and Slovak scholars and publicists. Ultimately Indian Studies were established as a special branch of learning, but even earlier interest in the subject lent great encouragement to the oppressed nation in its efforts to improve its language, increase its prestige and enhance the national consciousness of the people, a process which can be understood fully only in the context of Czech cultural life at the turn of the 18th century.

However, the Jesuits were not the only missionaries to leave the country for distant India. Members of other Catholic orders and evangelical missionary societies travelled there, too, but we shall hardly ever know them all by their names. Two of them, both members of the Teatinian Order, Andreáš Pánvic of Bohemia, and František Čabelský of Prague, set out for India from an Italian port as early as 1683. Yet they both shared the misfortune of falling ill during the voyage an died shortly afterwards, Pánvic still on board the ship, Čabelský after landing in Goa. A reference to a journey to India has been left us by Jakub Římař of Kroměříž (1682–1755). We learn from his diary that he did not reach India before 1717 and left the port of Surat in March, 1720. Approximately at the same time another Czech, Jan Vavřinec Scheuermann (1693–1734), set out for India's western coast. This native of Prague and member of the Carmelite Order, was active in Bombay until 1724.

After an adventurous journey to Ethiopia, a Czech Franciscan monk, Václav Prutký-Remedius (1701–1770), probably accompanied by a fellow countryman, Martin Lang, sailed farther east, to India. They landed at Puttuchcheri

(Tamilnad), in August 1753. But Prutký did not feel at ease in the local milieu and after proficiency as a harpist had earned him the favour of the French Governor, who gave him money to pay for his return passage, he left for Europe in the October of the same year, 1753. His *Itinerary* recording his journey to and stay in India is very valuable both as a source of information and a work of literature. Understandably, the descriptive passages are mainly concerned with countries lying outside India, but the writer was able to make the best of his short stay in the Tamil port and glean a wealth of interesting observations. Surprisingly he asserts – apparently quite reliably and with many details – that at that time there lived at Puttuchcheri about three hundred Germans and "many Czechs, Moravians and Praguers", who had allegedly been brought there as French prisoners of war or had fled from military camps. Also interesting is Prutký's remark that reports had been circulating in Europe about East India being a Catholic country. He was annoyed on learning that the contrary was true and became convinced that for this the European settlers were to blame, because, although keen on preaching morals to others, they set but poor examples of Christian virtues. In his view most missionaries would have been more fittingly described as lords. The Capuchins, Prutký complains, were living in greater luxury than many an Abbot in his monastery. He was likewise disgusted by quarrels between monastic orders and concluded his critical remarks with the following words: "Nevertheless, being no judge of these matters, I shall pass them over in silence."

Towards the end of the 18th century, South India witnessed the exertions of Josef Daniel Jeník (? 1757–1800), an evangelical missionary from the colony of Czech exiles in Berlin, who had been sent to India by a London society while

still a young student of theology. After learning Tamil he was despatched on a mission to Palamcottah whence he made several journeys. He spent the remainder of his life at Tinnevelly and Tanjore.

Travels by missionaries and their writings close – although not from a strictly chronological viewpoint – the long period of early direct reports about India, of echoes of a distant culture and sporadic contacts between the Czech and Slovak countries and India. It was a period during which objective cognition and rational thinking in general still met with many obstacles: ignorance, the narrow bounds of the religious outlook and, at a later stage, the disastrous consequences of colonial exploitation. All these handicaps have left deep traces on East-West relations. Possibilities of a gradual, though inevitable, improvement only began to take shape during the European Age of Reason and, where the Czechs and Slovaks are concerned, during the period of their struggle for national revival.

5 A CENTURY OF DISCOVERIES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN INDIA

"In this age men desire education. This is a felicitous sign everywhere and, in particular, in the Czech nation. Education is to the mind that which food is to the body, preserving it, infusing it with vigour, enabling it to grow and attain greater dignity. The main province of education is knowledge of our terrestrial abode. What nations inhabit it? What is their state of advancement, what their mode of living, manners and customs, and how are their communities constituted? How is our Earth formed? What are her countries like, her climates, creatures and plants, rivers and cities? What nations live on it, how are countries shaped, in a word, what picture does our world offer?"

HOW WELL has J. S. Tomíček (1806–1866), an ardent propagator of historical and travel literature, grasped the pressing urgency of questions, answers to which had been sought not only by his contemporaries but by his compatriots of both the preceding and the following generations. From the end of the 18th century on, the Czechs, and later the Slovaks, too, had lived through a hectic period of re-emerging national consciousness and of awakening modern political and cultural life. While new capitalist enterprise asserted itself on the economic scene, the European Age of Reason, with its streams of new thinking, provided the background against which gradually the modern nations of the Czechs and the Slovaks formed themselves, and ideas of a new nationalism budded forth. Alongside the progress achieved by scientific study, the founding of learned societies and the overall relaxation and regeneration of public life, interest in world developments grew apace in the country during the first decades of the 19th century. This revivalist activity and the revolutionary aspirations of the year 1848 were, it is true, temporarily damped by the absolutism of the Austrian

Government, but the Czechoslovak people's will to renew their independent national life could no more be permanently bridled.

Ideas of enlightenment and rationalism influenced the cultural life of Central Europe during the 18th century. Czech and Slovak scholars had even then access to writings of the leading spirits of the period. Geographical, ethnographic and historical literature, as well as new works on natural history, also set forth a wealth of information on India and her natural riches, works notable for a high level of exactitude and objectivity. Through various channels this information penetrated into Czech and Slovak scientific and specialised writing and, thanks to the spread of knowledge, soon grew to such proportions that we can mention only a few of the most influential works popularising India among Czech and Slovak readers.*

Czech literature on the geographical, historical and social conditions of India was greatly enriched by *Geograffia aneb vypsání okršleku zemského* (Geography, or the Description of the Entire Earth), published in 1798 at Banská Bystrica (Slovakia). It was a work by Ladislav Bartolomeides (1754

* It may be worth while to mention that the attempts of the Habsburg court to seize a share in profitable trade with India through the founding of the Ostend Company at the beginning of the 18th century also had a bearing on Bohemia, especially her textile and glass industries. In several Czechoslovak archives (e. g. at Liberec, Klášterec-on-Ohře and Kroměříž) interesting documents and correspondencies have been preserved, testifying to the activities of representatives of Austria's mercantile policy. These documents have recently ben studied by J. V. Polišenský.

Czechoslovak archives also shed light on unsuccessful attempts at establishing a trading company at Cheb (West Bohemia), which was to engage in trade with overseas countries by linking its activities with those of Dutch companies.

to 1825), a Slovak Protestant and ardent pioneer of patriotic and specialised literature, who maintained contacts with Czech patriots in Prague, especially with V. M. Kramérius. Bartolomeides carried on the tradition initiated by the earliest Slovak textbooks of geography. For instance, as early as 1639 David Frölich's *Medulla geographiae practicae* (Essentials of Practical Geography), containing information on the geography of Asia, was published at Bardejov, an east Slovak town unaffected by the counter-reformation drive, while in 1755 knowledge about Asia was further enhanced by the publication in Trnava of *Geographica globi terraquei Synopsis* (A Geographical Synopsis of the Globe and Continents) by J. Münich. Bartolomeides surpassed his contemporaries by the conception and lucidity of his work. Maps of India, engraved by the author himself, show the position of this country in the world and within the Asian continent (with certain inaccuracies) and a separate chapter is devoted to India in the text. The book records the situation before the territorial expansion of the East India Company, stresses the "terrible" magnitude of the country and its innumerable population, states that the Indians are genial and kindly people, very keen on personal hygiene and clean garments, and that even four thousand years before they had been so perfect as to be sought out by others desiring wisdom. Bartolomeides further discusses the country's riches, gems and precious metals, describes conditions in North India and Deccan, records the country's political division, the different kingdoms, and princedoms, as well as the key positions of European powers on her territory, and mentions the various nations, religions and castes making up the population of India.

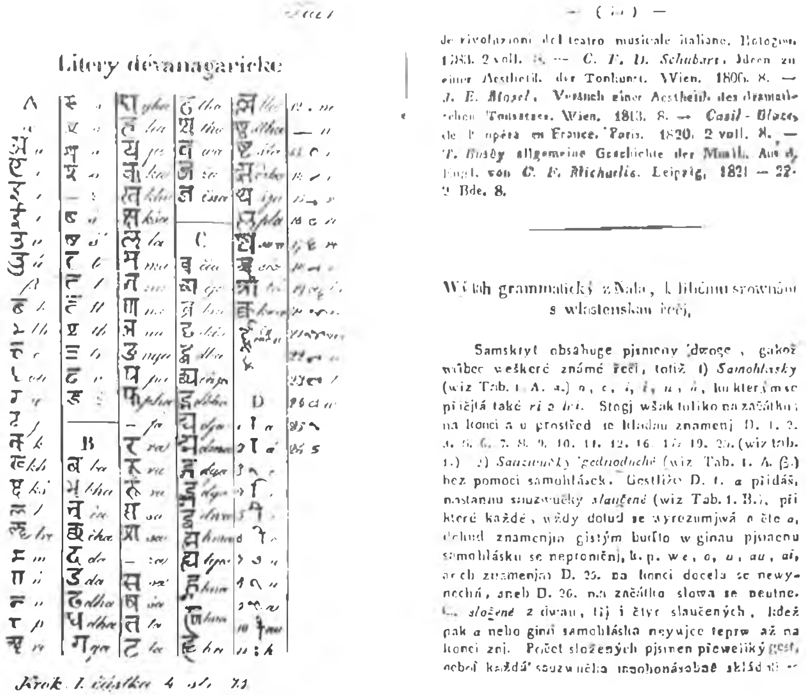
At about the same time Prague was witnessing the activities of Václav Matěj Kramérius (1759–1808), publisher

of popular educational literature, and of his son, Vaclav Radomil. The Krameriuses may be credited with having introduced Indian themes to wide circles of Czech readers. Let us mention at least V. M. Kramerius's *Historické vypsání Mogolského císařství* (An Historical Description of the Mughal Empire) from 1803, providing detailed information on India in the form of a conversation between a knowledgeable Messenger and Lipan, a farmer desiring information on India and the Indians, whose manners and customs he admires. Lipan assures the Messenger that his narrative "will awaken many of us to such virtues and laudable deeds".

Deep interest in India, and above all, in her ancient language, the Sanskrit, was aroused by the Father of Czech philological studies, Josef Dobrovský, who, as we know, had turned to the study of Indian languages under the stimulating influence of Přikryl's Grammar of Konkani.

Thus Přikryl's fragmentary work bridged the gap between the existing knowledge of India and the concrete, scientific interest in Indian culture of entire generations of Czech and Slovak scholars during the period of the National Revival. Stimulated by Dobrovský's discovery of affinities between the Indian and the Slavonic languages as well as by contemporary discoveries of Indian cultural heritage in Western Europe, many applied themselves to the study of Sanskrit and Ancient Indian literature and translated examples into Czech. From 1821 on, the review *Krok* published a series of serious informative articles on Indian philology. Josef Jungmann (1773–1847), a Czech philologist and historian of literature, contributed to the review some studies in Indian poetry (*Krátký přehled prosodie a metriky Indické* – A Short Survey of Indian Prosody and Metric) and other articles, and referred to Sanskrit as the "real mother of the Slavonic Tongue" and a language "the most perfect

The first Czech example of the Devanagari script in A. Jungmann's article on Sanskrit Grammar, *Krok*, 1823



Litery dévanagarické

de rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiane. Bologna 1783. 2 voll. 8. — *C. F. D. Schubart*, Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst. Wien. 1806. 8. — *J. E. Mosel*, Versuch einer Aesthetik des dramatischen Tonsatzes. Wien. 1813. 8. — *Castil-Blaze*, de l' opéra en France. Paris. 1820. 2 voll. 8. — *T. Busby* allgemeine Geschichte der Musik. Aus d. Engl. von *C. F. Michaelis*. Leipzig, 1821 — 22. 2 Bde. 8.

Wýtah grammatický z Nala, k libému srownání s wlastenskau řečí,

Samskryt obsahuge pjsmeny dwogé, gakož wůbec weškeré známé řeči, totiž 1) *Samohlásky* (wiz Tab. 1. A. a.) a, e, i, ī, u, ū, ku kterým se přičjtá také *ri* a *lri*. Stogj však toliko na začátku; na konci a u prostřed se kladau znamenj D. 1. 2. ... (wiz tab. 1.) 2) *Sauzwučky gednoduché* (wiz Tab. 1. A. β.) bez pomoci samohlásek. Gestliže D. 1. a přidáš, nastanau sauzwučky *slaučené* (wiz Tab. 1. B.), při které každé, wždy dolud se wyrozumjwá a čte a, dokud znamenjm gistým budto w ginau pjsmenu samohlásku se nepromění, k. p. we, o, u, au, ai, aneb znamenjm D. 25. na konci docela se newynechá, aneb D. 26. na začátku slowa se neutne. ... *složené* z dwau, tři i čtyr slaučených, kdež pak a nebo giná samohláska neyujce teprw až na konci zní. Počet složených pjsmen přeweliký gest, neboť každá sauzwučka mnohonásobně sklád...

Krok. I. částka 4. str. 73

under the Sun". In a letter to a friend he wrote with admiration: "These Indian chaps are as clever and adroit at versifying as at rope-climbing. Who can emulate them?"

His brother Antonín Jungmann (1775–1854) wrote a study *O sanskritu* (On Sanskrit), in which he substantiated his theory of linguistic affinity between Indian and Slavonic languages by quoting a certain F. Březovský, a lathe operator in Zagreb (Yugoslavia), who understood the languages he had met with in the course of his travels in India and Cochin China and had been equally well understood by the local

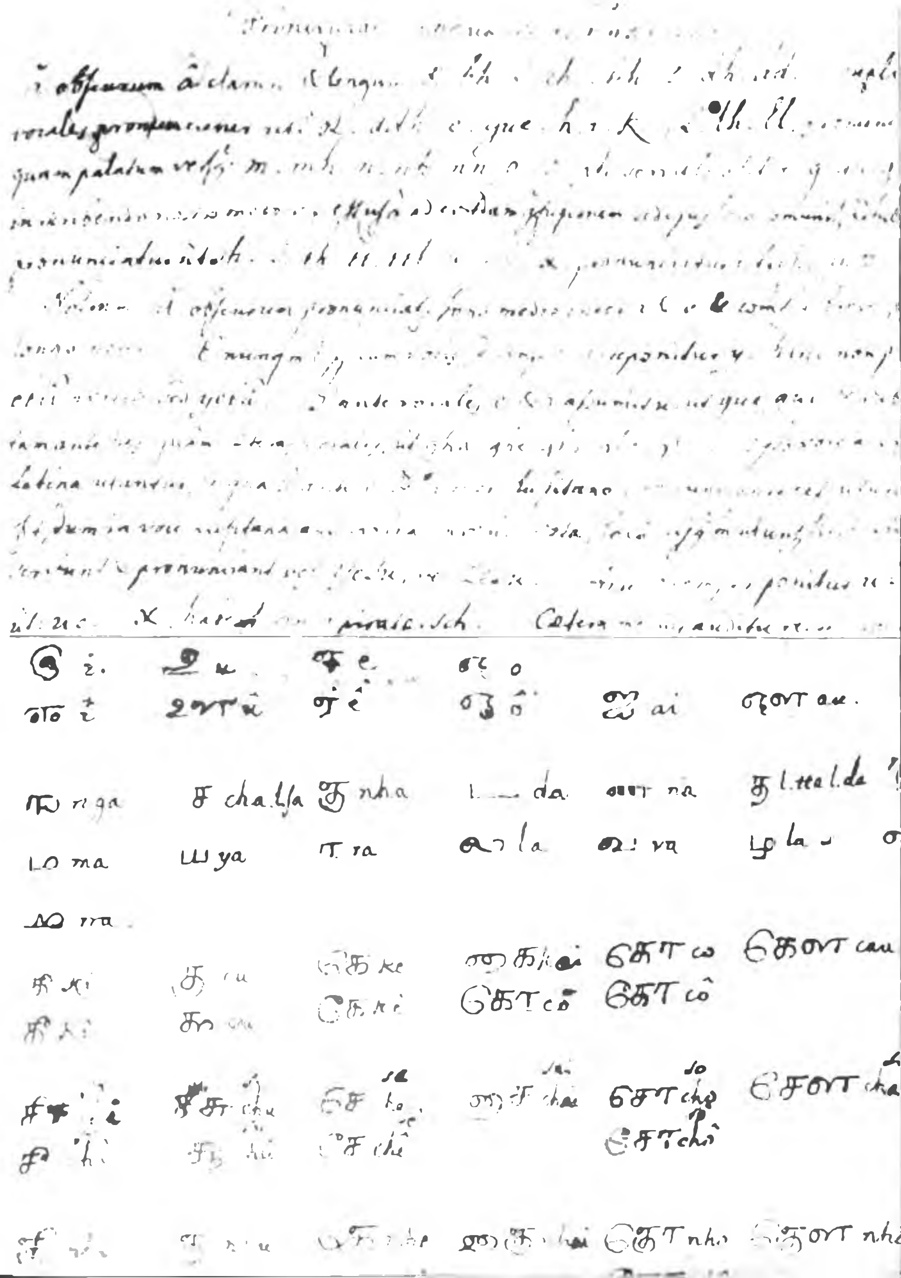
speakers. In his article *O Hindich* (On Indians) he left us a general outline of India and her inhabitants and described this country as the foundation of British power. He also published *Výtah gramatický z Nala k libému srovnání s vlasteneckou řeči* (A Grammatical Extract from Nala, to Be Kindly Compared with the Native Speech), an article supplemented by a grammar of Sanskrit in tabulated form and a reproduction of the Devanagari script. Another of his articles draws a comparison between Hindu and Slavonic deities.

The writer and publisher of Old Czech texts, Václav Hanka (1791–1861), was the first to introduce (in 1824) into Czech writing a passage from the *Ramayana* in a prose translation. Hanka's version was not based on the Sanskrit original but was introduced by an essay on that language and by a synopsis of the epic. The translation appeared under the title *Nářek rodičů nad smrtí jedináčka a válka Lakšmanova, bratra Ramova, s velikým Attikajou, synem Ravanovým* (The Parents' Lament over the Death of Their Only Son and the War Waged by Lakshmana, Rama's Brother, against the Great Attikaya, the Son of Ravana). Several Czech poets, inspired by Jungmann's articles, composed poems on Indian metrical patterns.

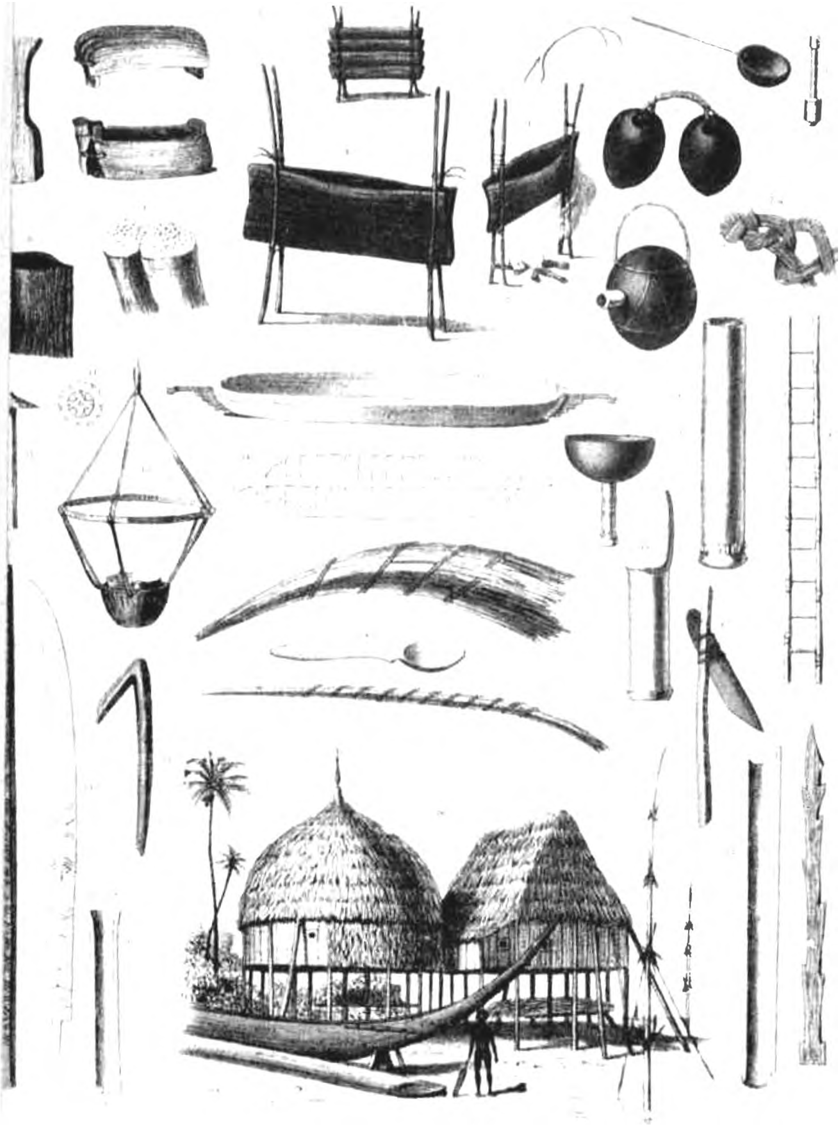
Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–1836), author of the poem *May,* took a lively interest in India, as can be inferred from his personal notes found after his death.

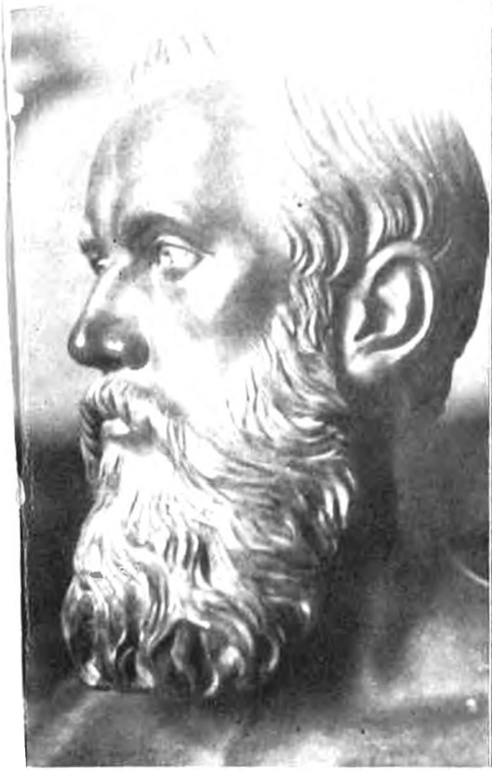
Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821–1856), a militant journalist and satirical poet, was another Czech writer attracted by India and her culture. When, at seventeen years of age, while still a grammar school pupil, he began to prepare himself systematically for a career as a public figure, he and some of his closest friends elaborated a romantic set of aims to be achieved in life. India and the study of Sanskrit were given

Karel Prikryl's manuscripts (middle of the 18th century)
a) Opening lines of Konkani Grammar
b) Fragment of Tamil Grammar



Drawings of dwellings and various articles of everyday use from the stay of Václav Svoboda in the Nicobar Islands in 1888.





Bust of Ferdinand Stolička
in the Calcutta National Museum

Otakar Feistmantel

Painters J. Hněvkovský and O. Nejedlý in Kerala, 1911.

O. Nejedlý in his studio after his return from India.

Hněvkovský's sketch for a large-scale painting of Shivaji.

prominence on the list. As a mature man, Havlíček hailed the publication of Klácel's Czech rendering of tales from the *Panchatantra* and warmly recommended them to teachers and educators of youth. In appraising the tales, Havlíček was also guided by political motives. He obviously had in mind the foreign oppressors of the Czechs when he wrote in a review that, in a country ruled by tyrants intolerant of opposition, wise men had to put political and religious truths into the mouths of animals, so that they could be swallowed by the rulers as sugar-coated pills.

The first Slovak scholar to take a serious interest in Sanskrit was Jozef Štefan Tamaško (1801-1881), a teacher at a Protestant grammar school in Bratislava. Tamaško studied Sanskrit for two years under Georg Ewald, a Göttingen Orientalist, and gladly reverted to this field of study later, while teaching in Bratislava. He is the author of the first publication on Sanskrit to have originated on Czechoslovak territory *De causis Linguae Sanscritae* (On the Origins of the Sanskrit Language, 1831). His other works include a translation of nine hymns from the *Rig-Veda* (1860) and an ode composed by himself in Sanskrit.

Pavel Josef Šafařík (1795–1861), another Slovak scholar, mastered Sanskrit through diligent study. He was a man of encyclopaedic learning, a historian, a philologist and a writer. His knowledge of Sanskrit underlay all fields of his research work. He appreciated the inclusion of Sanskrit in the "Indoeuropean family of languages" as a new step in linguistic study. In tracing the development of religious notions he pointed to parallels between the Indians and the Slavs, and on the whole shared the views upheld by Polish historians of the romantic school, namely, that the Slavs had originated in India.

A similarly romantic spirit, lacking, however, Šafařík's

The title page of the first book on Sanskrit published on Czechoslovak territory, a work by Štefan Tamaško, 1831

De causis

Linguae Sanscritae.

Dissertatio,

quam

ad munus Directoris atque Docentis in recens

aperto ludo literario

A. C. Baziniensi

auspicandum scripsit

Stephanus Tamasko.

Posonii, 1831.

Typis Haeredum Belnayanorum.

critical acumen, permeates the work of Ján Kollár (1793 to 1852), a Slovak poet and writer who spared no effort (including the study of Sanskrit) to prove the relationship between the Slavs and India. To his *Sláva bohyně* (Sláva – the Goddess) written in 1839, he appended three extensive comparisons: Identities and similarities occurring in Indian and Slavonic life (i); a list of words and expressions in Sanskrit, Romany and Slavonic, having the same roots and meanings (ii); a comparison of Indian and Slav mythology (iii), including "A Survey of Slavonic Mythological Characters Comparable to the Indian", comprising more than 200 names. Only a part of these "similarities", however, can stand the test of scientific examination, but Kollár's endeavours remain an interesting testimony both to the period of their origin and to the sense of affinity then existing between the Slavonic and the Indian world.

Sanskrit and Ancient Indian literature attracted the interest of the greatest Czech scholars of the period. The awareness of a relationship between Czech and Indian culture strengthened their patriotic feelings and stimulated their strivings to win national freedom for their fellow countrymen and their country. J. E. Purkyně (1787–1869), a Czech physiologist, whose discovery, epitomised in the words *Omne vivum ex ovo* (All living beings come from egg), earned him world-wide renown, was another ardent admirer of Indian literature. It is little known that this man of genius had an extraordinary talent for linguistic study and that he was probably the author of the first (unpublished) Czech translation of the story of *Nal and Damayanti,* from the *Mahabharata.* In his old age his interest was aroused by Bhartrihari's Sayings in Peter Bohlen's edition, on which he based his translation of *Prvních sto průpovědí* (The First One Hundred Sayings). The translation appeared in *Květy* (Blossoms), a

popular Prague journal. In 1868 this journal published Purkyně's poetic version of *God and the Bayadere, an Indian Legend,* based on a poem by Goethe.

One of the co-founders of the Sokol physical training organisation, Jindřich Fügner (1822–1865), had the following text printed on his visiting-cards: *Buddhau caranam anviccha kripanas phalahetavas.* This seems to be something more than an interesting biographical detail, as the idea expressed by the verse (Seek refinement in knowledge while to be pitied are those whose action is prompted by a reward) shows a striking similarity with the slogan devised by Fügner for the Sokol movement: Neither Gain, nor Glory.

There were not a few leading representatives of Czech literature who used Indian themes and drew inspiration from Indian sources. They presented their subjects with a view to pleasing Czech readers and, for the most part, with a remarkably Romantic tinge. Among these authors the most notable were Jan Neruda (1834–1891), Julius Zeyer (1841–1901), Svatopluk Čech (1846–1908) and Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912), among those of a later generation Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod (1860–1927), Josef Svatopluk Machar (1864 to 1942), Anna Marie Tilschová (1873–1957) and, in particular, Otakar Březina (1868–1929).

The year 1893 saw the première at the National Theatre of Shudraka's *Mrichchhakatikam* (The Clay Cart), in J. Vrchlický's translation of the European adaptation of the play by E. Pohl (known as *Vasantasena*), and in 1908 the same theatre put on *Kunala's Eyes,* an opera by the Czech composer Otakar Ostrčil, with a libretto by K. Mašek, based on a story by Julius Zeyer.

In the circumstances of the times, scholarly interest in India crystallised in close connection with the progress of Indoeuropean comparative philology and it is only true to

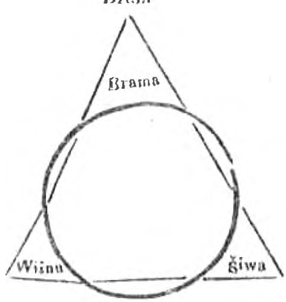
From J. Kollar's *Sláva bohyně* (Sláva – the Goddess) from 1839; chapter on Indian religion

sidla, k. p. Bobo, Buka; brze gako hry, k. p. Slepá Bába, Skomra atd. Co *Chr. G. Arndt, Urspr. d. eur. Sprachen* S. 8. o srownáwánj řečj pjše, to plaij i o srownáwánj mythologie slawské s indickau: „Auf diesem Wege wird man die Geschichte der Mythologie, und dadurch gewissermassen, selbst die Geschichte des Menschengeschlechtes, bis über die Grenzen aller geschriebenen Geschichte und aufbewahrten Traditionen verfolgen; so wie man durch die nähere Untersuchung und Vergleichung der Beschaffenheit mehrerer, weit von einander entfernten Gebirge, eine Naturgeschichte des Erdballs vorbereitet hat, die den ersten Anfang unserer bekannten Weltgeschichte, um viele tausend Jahre hinter sich lässt." W indické Mythologii má geden bůh často mnoho přjgmenj čili rozličných názwůw a wlastnostj, každé přjgmenj gest gakoby zwláštnj bůh a wšak zase wšudy a we wšem totožnost, nebo každé přjgmeno gest rowné samému bohu. Přjgmena, přetwory a manželky gsau gen ukazy a wywinowanj gednoho a téhož boha w rozličných časjch a způsobách.

Přehled indického náboženstwj.

I. Božstwa.

1. Prwnj třjdy:



Trimurti

2. Druhé třjdy, Gandharva, Div Dovetas:

a) *Sur* čili Bjlj, Bělbohowé:

aa) Wišnu, Besu čili ochráncowé swěta:

1 *Indri*, bůh oblohy čili Wedra; manželka: *Indrani* (Wedrina)

2 *Agni* bůh Ohně; manželka *Agnaji* čili *Swaha* (Ohňowa Sláwa)

say that it had not disengaged itself from this partnership until the war of 1914–18. The founder of Indian studies in Prague University was August Schleicher (1821–1868), who became the University's first Ordinary in 1850. Among other writings he is responsible for the translation into and publishing in Czech of the first episodes from the Sanskrit original of the Mahabharata – *The Deluge.* In collaboration with F. Šohaj (1816–1878), he translated *Nal and Damayanti.* Schleicher's successor at the University, Alfred Ludwig (1837–1912), interested himself particularly in Vedic literature and produced, among other translations, an annotated German version of the 1,028 hymns of the *Rig-Veda* (the first German translation of the work), translations of verses from the *Sama-Veda* and selected hymns from the *Atharva-Veda.* One of his later writings touches upon Dravidian philology: *On the Phonetic Peculiarities of Telugu and the Term Dravida.* After the reorganisation of Prague University in 1882*, a course of lectures on the beginnings of Sanskrit was started by Alois Vaníček (1825–1883) who, however, died shortly afterwards. Another Czech Indologist to die prematurely, was Emanuel Kovář (1861–98), who specialised in Indian dramatic literature besides translating hymns from the *Rig-Veda* and a collection of fables, *Hitopadesha,* into Czech. Among the numbers of Czech Sanskritists and comparative philologists, special mention is due

* On its foundation in 1348 by Charles IV, Prague University was the first institution of this type in Central Europe. After the Battle of the White Mountain (1620), when it came under Jesuit administration, all lectures were given in Latin. In the eighties of the 18th century the University was Germanised and about a century later (in 1882) was divided into a Czech and a German University. In 1920 a law was passed declaring the Czech University to be the legitimate heir of the original Charles (Caroline) University.

to Professor Čeněk Šercl (1843–1906). This prodigious linguist – nicknamed the Czech Mezzofanti, who even in his youth startled his contemporaries by his knowledge of 30 western and eastern languages (including Sanskrit, Hindustani and Romany) – spent most of his mature life teaching and doing research work at universities abroad, e. g. in Kharkov and Odessa. His life work includes *A Grammar of Sanskrit* (written in Russian), a book on *The Life of the Ancient Indians,* and others writings. His bulky volume of *Lingustic Studies* examines Dravidian linguistic material, especially Kanarese, Tamil and Telugu.

But not even at this stage of scholarly interest in India was research confined to the domains of linguistics and literature alone. For instance, a four-volume book on Indian philosophical systems and their relationship to Christianity was written by František Čupr (1821–82). Josef Virgil Grohman (1831–1919), a grammar-school teacher, studied the popular therapeutic methods of Ancient India, besides interesting himself in Indian mythology and Vedic texts from a medical viewpoint. Specialists in Indian ethnography, geology and palaentology will be mentioned at the end of the chapter.

The constitution of Indology as a separate branch of study at the turn of the 19th century was completed by the comprehensive research work of Professor Josef Zubatý (1885 to 1931), centering on analysis of the grammatical structure of the Vedic language. Zubatý also made a noteworthy contribution to the study of Ancient Indian literature (e. g. *On Vedic Literature*), comparative research and translations from Sanskrit, especially by his rendering of works by Kalidasa. Thus the foundations of an independent department of study – Classical Indology – had already been laid in effect before the renewal of Czechoslovak independence in 1918.

Deeper scientific interest in Indian culture found expression in many specialised works, in original books of travels, and, last but not least, in research done by Czech scholars in India. As early as 1787 a voluminous work was published (in German) in the Moravian metropolis of Brno, J. W. Archenholz's *Die Engländer in Indien* (The English in India), based on Orme's history. From the beginning of the 19th century on, Asian and Indian topics and problems found their place with increasing frequency in general works on history, geography, ethnography and in encyclopaedic works. Although the majority of these were compilations made abroad or based on second-hand information, now and then attempts at original interpretations can be noted. As regards the geography of India, a comparatively detailed work was T. F. Ehrmann's *Neueste Kunde von Asien* (Newest Knowledge of Asia) published as vol. 11 of a series covering the whole world (Prague, 1812). Gradually more and more chapters were devoted to India in original works, such as Karel Šádek's *General Geography* (published at Hradec Králové in eastern Bohemia between 1822 and 1824), or in K. V. Zap's *General Geography* (the part relating to India was published in Prague in 1850). The natural conditions of India were described by J. Palacký (1830–1908) in *Asie*, Prague, 1872. In his *Ethnography* (Prague, 1881–83), as well as in later writings, such as *Národopis všech dílů světa* (The Ethnography of All Parts of the World) and *Žena ve zvycích a mravech národů* (The Woman in the Customs and Morals of Nations), published shortly before the 1914–1918 war, J. Vlach (1852–1919) also in part relied on Indian material. J. Basl's *Asie* (1908) devotes more that 60 pages to India. Another informative work from the prewar period is F. Machát's *Ilustrovaný zeměpis všech dílů světa* (An Illustrated Geography of All the Continents, 1911). Ex-

ceptionally these and other publications on geography contain interesting historical, political and economic digressions.

Problems of Indian history were discussed by the founder of modern Czech historical science, František Palacký (1798 to 1876), in his survey *O nejstarších dějinách a dějepiscích národů asiatských* (On the Most Ancient History and Historians of the Asian Nations, 1831), an adaptation of a book by J. Klaproth. In most works by Czech and Slovak authors on world history, published during the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, discussion of modern Indian history is directly or indirectly based on British models. This is true, for instance, of *Krátký všeobecný dějepis* (A Concise General History) by V. V. Tomek (1842) with an Introduction by P. J. Šafařík. T. B. Macaulay's *History of England* was translated into Czech in the sixties of the 19th century. Nevertheless, more than one work by a Czech or Slovak author from the latter half of the last century show attempts at an independent critical approach to the evaluation of historical personalities and periods in modern Indian history. Outstanding in this respect are the chapters devoted to India in *Děje anglické země* (A History of England) by the abovementioned J. S. Tomíček, published in Prague, 1849. Czech authors also pointed to the social and economic consequences of colonialisation and their historical repercussions. For instance J. Basl noted that 250 million Indians were living in dire poverty and added that they would not be starving "had they not been forced to deliver the fruits of their exertions to their overlords, none of whom are dying of hunger, but are thriving and growing rich".

From the beginning of the 19th century on, dozens of specialised treatises and textbooks of geography and history had been published, and hundreds of articles on India appeared in the periodical press. India and her life were also

brought nearer to the Czech and Slovak reading public by the first encyclopaedic works, above all by the *Slovník naučný* (Encyclopaedia) edited by F. L. Rieger (1818–1903), which was published in Prague from 1860–1873. Another such work was *Ottův slovník naučný* (Otto's Encyclopaedia) from 1888–1909. In Rieger's Encyclopaedia the articles pertaining to India were, for the most part, the work of members of the editorial board, only certain articles (e. g. on natural conditions, history and culture) being contributed by outsiders, two Professors of Prague University, J. Palacký and J. Gebauer (the latter contributing the article on Sanskrit). The eleven-volume Rieger's Encyclopaedia was the first venture of this kind on Czechoslovak territory and found subscribers even in Russia, Poland, Croatia and France. Otto's Encyclopaedia, in 27 volumes, contained far more, and more competent, information on India. Among the members of Otto's board of editors were some Indologists and Orientalists. Apart from J. Palacký, information on India was provided by O. Feistmantel, J. Zubatý and R. Dvořák, whose article on the Bengali language and literature was the first essay on this theme by a Czech.

From the seventies on, Czech scholars and travellers who visited the country were able to produce eye-witness reports. In the course of the 19th century, not a few Czechs came to India on various occasions and for different purposes, and their numbers grew during the period shortly preceding the Great War. As early as 1803, František Krása, a Czech oboe virtuoso, lived in Bengal and during the late thirties Jan Vilém Helfer (1810–1840), a naturalist, spent some time in India (and Burma) before meeting a tragic death on the Andaman Islands. He was probably the first Czech to learn Hindustani and his collections (mainly of insects) greatly enriched the natural history department of the

National Museum in Prague. Helfer's diaries were published by his widow in 1873.

Among the 350 men on board the *Novara*, an Austrian frigate, which, in the course of her round-the-world voyage, stopped for 12 days in Madras and for more than a month at the Nicobar Islands during the Great Indian Mutiny (January and February 1858), we can find many Czech names. In 1859, Čeněk Paclt (1813–1887), a genial Czech globetrotter, soap-maker, gold-digger and diamond grinder, spent about a fortnight in Calcutta, having been attracted there, without doubt, by tales of gold deposits in Bengal. His letters, published later in book form, contain brief references to his stay in India. On the other hand, his letters from the seventies, when he was living in South Africa, abound with interesting observations on the life and customs of Indian immigrants. Jindřich Vávra (1831–1887), who circled the world many times while working as a ship's surgeon, visited India during the early eighteen-seventies and made a journey to the Himalayas. Part of his botanical collections are in the care of the Moravian Museum at Brno, the Moravian metropolis and Vávra's birthplace. Another Czech employed as a ship's surgeon, Václav Svoboda (1850–1924), used his ship's (the Austrian *Aurora*) call at the Nicobar Islands to make a fairly detailed study of the life and customs of the local population. On his return home, his observations appeared in geographical and ethnographical journals. His countryman Václav Stejskal, intendant on the same ship, brought home a valuable ethnographical collection which he bequeathed to the National Museum in Prague.

An important contribution to the development of the geology and palaeontology of India was made by two other Czechs. Ferdinand Stolička (1838–1874), born near the Moravian town of Kroměříž, is recalled to visitors to the

National Museum in Calcutta by a bust in the Department of Palaeontology. From 1863 on he worked on the staff of the Geological Survey of India and later became scientific secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. (The Society's Hall displays a portrait and another bust of Stolička). He participated in several scientific expeditions, mainly into the Himalayas, the Cutch Peninsula and the Andaman Islands, and published many works. At his own request he took part in Forsyth's mission to Yarkand and Kashgar in Central Asia. Barely 36 years old, he died during a strenuous march over the Karakoran Pass on the return journey and lies buried at Leh. After 1875 his work was followed up, during eight years of travels through Deccan, the Hindustan Lowland, Indian Himalaya and Sikkim, by Otakar Feistmantel (1848–1891), who won fame mainly by his work on fossilised plants in the coal-bearing strata of Gondwana. Feistmantel, too, became a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, learned Hindi and Urdu, besides cultivating a variety of interests. On his travels he readily exercised his outstanding faculty of observation. But on the whole he was prevented from closer contacts with the Indian population by his status as a gazetted officer, and his views did not differ much from the superior attitudes of many other European residents.

From his Indian travels Feistmantel brought back a wealth of natural, historical, ethnographic and documentary material, as well as many examples of Indian craftsmanship. A great "Indian Exhibition" based on Feistmantel's collections (which filled seven exhibition rooms) was held in Prague in 1884. It met with a keen interest on the part of the city's public, as, without doubt, it was the first Czech exhibition on India. A large part of the exhibits are preserved to this day among the collections of the Náprstek Mu-

seum of Asian, African and American Cultures. Feistmantel is the author of some popular publications and articles, describing his travels in India, the country's cultural landmarks, history, political system and agricultural conditions.

Ten years after Feistmantel left, India was visited by another Czech naturalist, Josef Kořenský (1847–1938), a professional author of travelogues, who recorded his impressions in a book describing his round-the-world journey. In 1901 Jindřich Uzel (1868–1946), a phytopathologist, made his first journey to Bombay and thence to Ceylon, revisiting India on his second trip to Ceylon in 1909–10. He, too, recorded his recollections in the form of an article serialised by *Osvěta,* a Prague journal. In 1904 the southern and south-western inland of India was traversed by a well known pair of Czech travellers and big game hunters, Bedřich Machulka (1875–1954) and Richard Štorch (1877–1927), on their voyage from Ceylon to Iran.

The first Czechoslovak Indologist to visit India was Otakar Pertold (1884–1965). He used his first stay from 1909 to 1910 for assembling a wealth of documentary material for further scientific work in the fields of ethnography, study of religions and philology. His travel sketches, which appeared in the daily press, found a responsive public and were published in book form in 1911 under the title *Cesty po Hindustánu* (Hindustan Travels).

At about the same time India was discovered by a pair of young Czech painters, Jaroslav Hněvkovský (1884–1955) and Otakar Nejedlý (1883–1957). Both also spent some time in Ceylon; the latter left India two years after but Hněvkovský did not return home until 1913, when a comprehensive exhibition of his paintings from India was held at the Art Club *Umělecká beseda* in Prague. Their adventurous wanderings, inspired by a romantic interest in the East and

by the lure of the exotic flora, are to this day fondly recalled by many Czechoslovak artists of the older generation. Practically without financial means and certainly free from prejudice, the two artists mixed with simple Indian villagers and fishermen, spending many months – and sometimes miraculously escaping grave dangers – in the towns, villages and jungles of South Asia. This was a period of unforgettable impressions and creative inspiration for them both. Both left their hearts in India, Hněvkovský returning to the country once more after the war. They described their experience in books, which have lost little of their freshness to this day, as witnessed by a recent re-edition of Nejedlý's *Memories*. With rare sincerity and frankness they spoke of their impressions, loves, hardships and art experimentation. Like the trips of some of their predecessors, Hněvkovský's and Nejedlý's tour greatly stimulated Czechoslovak interest in India before the first world war and after.

Yet it was not until after the Czechs and Slovaks had won their national independence that this interest in India was able to develop under more favourable conditions.

6 ECHOES OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

AS WE HAVE SEEN, foundations had, on the whole, been laid for a scholarly appreciation of India's cultural legacy before the 1914 war, while many new aspects of the country's past and contemporary life had been revealed to the Czech and Slovak public by both specialised and travel literature. The situation was, however, far less favourable to direct contacts with new streams of ideas and political movements, in which the strivings of the peoples of India for a free life and demands posed by awakened Indian nationalism were finding expression. Like the Indians, the Czechs and the Slovaks lived under foreign political domination, and although national oppression under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was not fully comparable with British colonial rule in India, the existing state of affairs was in many ways responsible, directly and indirectly, for the paucity of information on contemporary events in the political arena of faraway India.

The political development of India and Czechoslovakia nevertheless did show certain analogies. During its initial stage, the Czech and Slovak national revival movement had much in common with the cultural reforms advocated in Bengal by Ram Mohan Roy, "the father of Indian nationalism." The defeat of the Czech democratic revolution in the stormy year 1848 and the suppression of an anti-British rising in India ten years later revealed the strengths and weaknesses in both countries of popular resistance to rule by a foreign power. There were also striking similarities between the organised political struggles and movements for national liberation. Incidentally, the endeavour of the Czech bourgeoisie to assert themselves on the home market, epitomised in the slogan "svůj k svému" (Hold to Your Kind), is in respect of both etymology and content an analogy of the Indian call for *Swadeshi*. Moreover, the Czech and Slovak national movem-

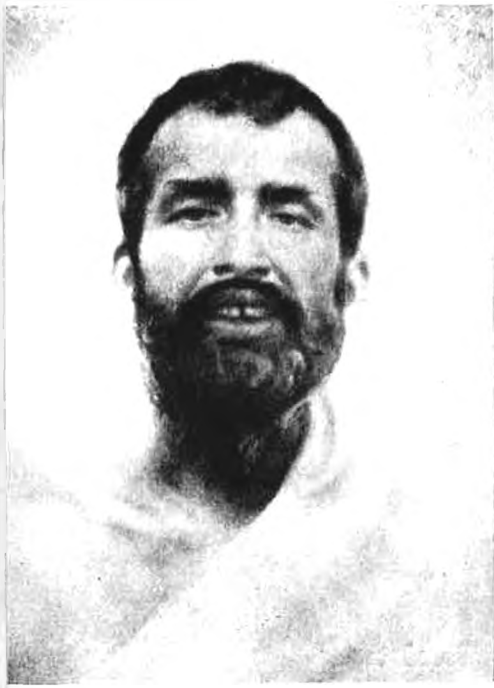
ent naturally reached out beyond the frontiers of the subjugated country, seeking encouragement and ideological support in the democratic strivings of other peoples.

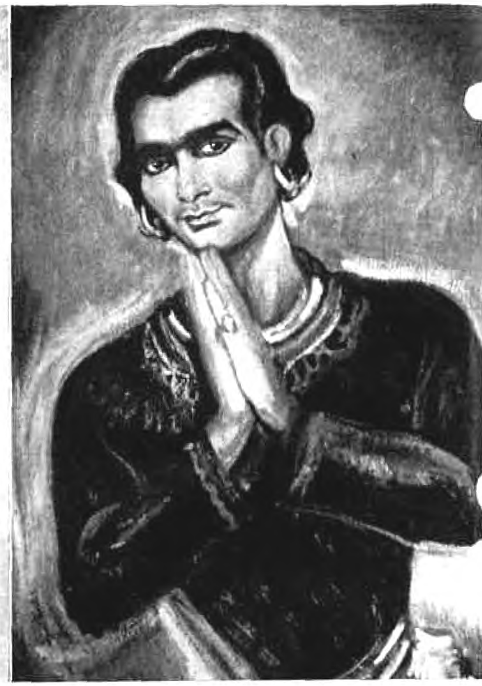
During the forties of the 19th century the Czechs found such inspiration in the freedom fight courageously waged by the Irish. A similar role was played by the example of the Indian national movement in its early stages, which were reported in the Czech press. As strict censorship under the Austrian monarchy made straightforward writing a sheer impossibility, all political articles had to be worded in ambiguous terms, ample use being made of allusions and allegories eagerly deciphered by a readership trained to read "between the lines".

An isolated, but all the more interesting, indication of response to the modern reform movement in India appeared in *Česká včela* (Czech Bee) in 1845. This was a long, serialised article, probably by Karel Boleslav Štorch (1812–1868), the journal's editor, acquainting the Czech public with Ram Mohan Roy's and Dvarkanath Tagore's campaign. The admirably informed journalist laid particular emphasis on the efforts of these, to use his own term, "revolutionaries of popular education" to achieve a general advancement throughout India, to introduce technical education, to gain a place for Indians in the national administration and the country's Government. The author especially admired the courage shown by the two revolutionaries in battling against the orthodox prejudices of Hinduism and the backward views then rife among their fellow-countrymen. The style and wording of the article betray a desire that the Indian example should be followed and that it should be emulated by similarly patriotic efforts at home. It is stressed that for Dvarkanath Tagore social progress was a path leading to the rebirth of India. The article ends with the following eloquent passage: "We

Rabindranath Tagore's first visit to Czechoslovakia
in the spring of 1921. The visitor was accompanied by Vincenc Lesný.

M. Winternitz with his pupils O. Stein
and V. Gampert along with Kamalabai Deshpande,
the first Indian woman-graduate of Indology at Prague University, 1933.





The famous portrait
of Ramakrishna by F. Dvořák.

Portrait of Uday Shankar
painted by Zdenka Burghauserová
during his visit to Prague.

Indian women. Sketch by T. F. Šimon.

Participants in the constituent meeting of the Indian Association in Prague, 1934, with Subhas Chandra Bose in the front row

Meeting of the Indian students from Europe in Prague addressed by the Mayor of Prague, 1936.

V. Lesný with Subhas Chandra Bose during one of the latter's visits to Czechoslovakia in the 1930s.

have recorded this example so that it can be restated that the happiness of a nation lies in the progress of education. Even if our own education may be on a high level, let us learn from these sons of their country their noble love of their neighbours and homeland, despised though it may be. Happy a nation which has its Dvarkanaths".

At the end of the eighteen-fifties the Czech and Slovak press was supplied with reports on India to a degree never witnessed before. This, however, occurred during a period of intensified political absolutism and stepped-up persecution of every form of resistance to the monarchy. Under these circumstances the public found information about the Sepoy Mutiny and the war waged to expel foreigners from Indian territory in innumerable newspaper articles, but the majority were brief translations of or excerpts from news supplied by British and other agencies, affording no possibility of individual interpretation and a personal attitude. How even these reports were interfered with by the Government censorship can be seen from a comparison of sympathies aroused by the Indian Mutiny in other Slavonic countries, for instance in Bulgaria and Russia, where biassed agency news did not prevent commentators from grasping the real causes of the dramatic events that shook colonial rule in several Indian regions.

So far no sources are available enabling us to draw a full picture of the contemporary reaction to and evaluation of these events among the Czechs and Slovaks. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the Mutiny of 1857–9 was followed with the greatest interest and that India and Indian affairs were widely reported in the daily press, certainly a radical change in the situation existing until then.

Exactly a month after the Sepoy Mutiny flared up at Meerut, the first news from the "Indian battlefield" reached

Prague via London, where it arrived by sea-mail. Thereafter newspapers in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, periodically registered the progress of military operations. While on earlier occasion, for instance the reporting of an unsuccessful British expedition in Afghanistan, press notices in the foreign news columns of Czech newspapers appeared under the date-line *England* or even *London,* the practice changed during the anti-British rising in India and reports thenceforth bore the date-line *East India.* Many Indian place-names found a permanent place in the local press of the period. For over two years Czech and Slovak readers followed the events of the first Indian freedom war, reports of battles, the storming of cities and fortresses, debates in the British Parliament and news of concentration of British troops on Indian territory, of acts of cruelty perpetrated by both sides, the guerilla-type of hostilities during the later stages of the conflict and reprisals taken by the colonial power. They became acquainted with the names of at least a few prominent leaders of the armed uprising, such as Nana Sahab and Tantya Topi, and with those of the representatives of the re-proclaimed Mughal Empire. The simple facts enabled the Czech public to discover for themselves the interconnections between the policies of the East India Company, the Mutiny, the necessity for an early abolition of the Company and Britain's attitude to digging through the Suez Isthmus as an expedient for shortening the passage to South and East Asia.

As has been stated above, news arrived mainly through London, but occasional reports were reprinted from the press of Paris and Petersburg. At the end of 1858, the Prague daily *Bohemia* printed the news that the proclamation by the British Queen about assuming colonial rule over India had not impressed the Indians as had been expected and quoted a statement by an Indian journalist who had written in a

"Hindustani" paper that "...all protestations and concessions made by this Proclamation had already been repeatedly enunciated by the East India Company but have remained on paper or been discarded under various pretexts."

The first Czech encyclopaedia, Rieger's, originated at the time of the Great Indian Mutiny, and so it is no wonder that due attention was devoted to the event in the article on India. The Mutiny was described as the most important event in the history of British colonial rule. On the other hand, opinions were published, for instance in *Cyrill a Method*, a Slovak Catholic paper, drawing upon a French source, alleging that the Indian Mutiny was a punishment meted out by God to England for deserting the unity of the Catholic Church.

The new stage in the Indian liberation movement, which now had its political platform in the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress, met with its widest response on Czechoslovak territory early in the 20th century, in the years of campaigns against the partition of Bengal and of Tilak's radical leadership. Even before these events, however, numerous reports and comments about Indian affairs had appeared in the Czech press. Apart from rare exceptions, such as Feistmantel's reflections, newspaper articles continued to be reprinted from foreign journals, mainly British, often, however, from unofficial periodicals, critical of Government policies. This new orientation and the shift of interest in the direction of topical problems can be exemplified by an article on an Indian famine, reprinted in 1897 from *The Social Democrat*, a London paper, by *Akademie*, the press organ of Czech socialist youth. This was a detailed and well-documented analysis setting forth concrete data on the draining away of the Indian national product to the colonial metropolis. The author's conclusion was that "above all the British Government is responsible for the utter decline of India".

During this period a young Indian lawyer, Mohandas Karamchad Gandhi, was already attracting some attention. It would certainly be an exaggeration to infer, from sporadic remarks in the contemporary European Press about his activity in South Africa, that his philosophical views and ideas on new forms of resistance by non-violent means had a direct impact on Central Europe. Nevertheless, it is an interesting fact that similar views were at that time in evidence among the young Czech generation. Undoubtedly this was due to the influence of Count L. N. Tolstoy's teaching and possibly also of Petr Chelčický (circa 1390–1460), a Czech medieval thinker. It is certainly noteworthy that these ideas professed by a small group of University students found a forum in the above mentioned journal, *Akademie,* in February, 1898. A young law student, Gusta Žalud (1872–1928), in his mature age a well known publicist and sociologist, analysed the philosophy of repudiating violence not only from a religious but from a positivist, rationalist standpoint. He saw a path to the eradication of evil in renouncing all violence, in self-restraint and self-sacrifice. Should violence be opposed by non-violence, it is necessary to proceed to the crux of the problem and to adopt an uncompromising stand: violence should also be rejected as a means of defence, as repulsion of an attack by violence does not lead to reconciliation but to an armed truce. Such an attitude has nothing in common with quietism and passivity, as this absolute humanism does not rule out the necessity of courageously resisting evil. Not, of course, through evil but through good action, not by violence but by non-violence, which is far more effective. To sustain a wrong requires more active energy than countering an attack by another attack. The author concludes his essay by discussing the possibility of gradually attaining this "Utopian" state: through education, reform of the legal system,

freeing men of their obsession with private property, abolishing elements of coercion in organs of state executive power etc. In postulating the absolute application of non-violent resistance to evil and demanding an unequivocally active attitude, the young Žalud came close to Gandhi's conception of *satyagraha*. In any case it was symptomatic that the feeling of factual helplessness vis-à-vis the armed power of a foreign rule was reflected in isolated, and purely theoretical, deliberations on how to mobilise the moral strength of the nation and to apply the principle of resistance by active non-violence in the Czech Lands, too.

The new age, the 20th century, was from its very beginning marked by the upsurge of the Indian national movement, which soon grew to such proportions and intensity that it could no longer remain confined to the Indian subcontinent. It was now to hold the attention of the world public, whatever their attitude to India. The Czechs and the Slovaks turned with renewed interest to political events in a country whose cultural values had long been firmly impressed on their subconscious mind and to which they had always looked with friendly sympathy.

Asian affairs were followed with keen interest during the Russo-Japanese War in the Far East. From the end of 1905 on, the foreign news columns of Czech and Slovak newspapers were again filled with despatches from India, now presented and commented upon more fully than barely a half-century before. These news items reflected the situation in India and the British reaction to it. The picture of events in this immense Asian country appeared in a sharper light, revealing many new details of the all-Indian resistance to colonial rule. The manner in which the Czech and Slovak press dealt with the new aspects of the Indian liberation movement, so close in spirit to the Czechoslovak people, is an indication

that events in distant India were felt to be topical in Central Europe precisely on account of their internal affinity and similarities with the local national movements.

For the first time the Czech and Slovak press introduced Indian students and intellectuals to their readers, reporting their demonstrations accompanied by the patriotic song *Bande Mataram*, and the persecutions of those who expressed by this song their love of their country and their resistance to foreign overlords. Boycotts of British goods also came into the news; *Národní listy*, the daily expressing the interests of the Czech bourgeoisie, printed on 25 November 1905 a quotation from the London *Express*, alleging that, in the Bengal Province, the boycott of British goods had grown into the first struggle against British rule.

The Czechoslovak public began to acquaint themselves with the organisation of the Indian national movement and its leading representatives. In 1906 the Indian National Congress session at Calcutta was extensively reported as the greatest political assembly ever held in India. At this session, which was noted for its radical mood, the Chairman called for a campaign for *Swaraj* for India. Reports gave the names of several national leaders, including Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Great attention was devoted to the tour of India by the British Labour Member of Parliament, Keir Hardie, and to the enthusiastic reception given him by the Indians. It can also be noted that this British militant against imperialism aroused similarly affectionate feelings among the Czechoslovak democratically-minded public. Not only socialist papers but also the sedate *Národní listy* (on 5 October 1907) reported Hardie's courageous stand and published his statement that conditions in East Bengal were even worse than those in Russia, bearing comparison with the mishandling of Armenians by the Turks.

Nor did the first political strike of the Indian working class pass unnoticed. *Akademie* (Vol. XII/519) wrote the following about the Bombay events of 1908: "The handful of telegrams containing laconic news of 'a few' workingmen shot dead by the British infantry give an idea of the brutality and violence of the British Government's conduct in India. About 14,000 diverse workers struck work in Bombay. They were later joined out of solidarity by men from some other factories, as a result of which the number of strikers rose to 20,000". Undoubtedly, great attention was also aroused by the terrorist movement, by attempts on the lives of representatives of colonial rule and by the courageous, patriotic attitude of those who, endeavouring in this individualistic manner to fight for their country's freedom, were condemned to death. Prague was aware of the existence of the journal *Indian Sociologist,* later banned, whose publication is bound up with the name of an outstanding figure in the Indian national resistance, Shyamaji Krishnavarma, described by Maxim Gorky as the "Mazzini of India". The Czech press took notice of another revolutionary, likewise active in his European exile, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and of his exciting escape and arrest while being deported from Britain to India.

The momentous events of these years, such as, for instance, the anti-British rising at Dacca, in the summer of 1910, found a prominent place in Czech journals of the period, in articles filling in the picture of contemporary India and giving the public a more objective view of life in that country. In connection with the growth of the Indian national movement during the first decades of the 20th century, Czech and Slovak dailies and other periodicals carried many articles modestly attempting to interpret and analyse the background of events currently taking place in India. Whether these were

reflections on the colonial army, or on the consequences of the introduction of Western-type education, of Indian liberalism and on the international aspects of British policy, they were an important contribution to the existing knowledge of India, arousing new interest among fairly wide sections of the educated public.

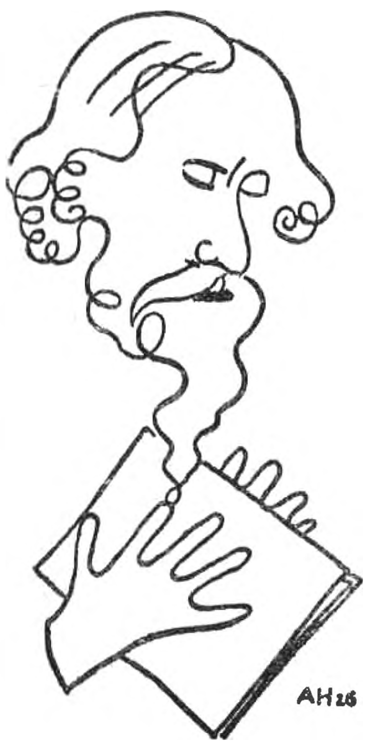
After the outbreak of war in 1914, Indian affairs and their coverage in the Czech and Slovak press understandably receded into the background. Yet now and then reports were printed about the valour of Indian troops on various battlefields of the Great War. An editorial article on commercial relations with India, which appeared on 11 April 1915 in the Social Democratic daily *Právo lidu* concludes with the following significant statement: "The industrial development of this greatest colony in the world will bring in its wake changes in all directions. The country will finally achieve its economic and, simultaneously, political independence. And the present war, which will mark a new stage in the history of India, will serve to accelerate the process, whereby all India will achieve independence".

7 GROWING CONTACTS AND TIES OF FRIENDSHIP

WHEN IN THE NINETEEN-FORTIES the Bengali-scholar Benoy Kumar Sarkar was pondering the traditions of his country's relationships with Central Europe, he drew the following, probably correct, conclusion: "Hus and Comenius are the only two Czech masters with whom Indians had cultural contacts towards the beginning of the present century..." After the Great War, however, the situation changed rapidly, resulting in a speedy overcoming of the former one-sidedness in Indo-Czechoslovak relationships. The Czechs and Slovaks concluded their centuries-long struggle for a renewal of national independence. In 1918, a sovereign Czechoslovak Republic became a fact. Although at that time India still remained a colony, the fight of her peoples for independence had grown to such proportions as to become a primary moving force in the country's post-war development.

Czechoslovakia's first Consul in Bombay was Otakar Pertold, an outstanding Indologist, well-acquainted with Indian life from his prewar visits, and an enthusiastic interpreter of Indian culture in his country. In contacts between the two countries, commercial exchanges were increasingly coming to the fore. Czechoslovakia was mainly an importer of cotton, oleaginous seeds and jute, while India was predominantly interested in Czechoslovakia's traditional goods, such as glass, iron and steel products, as well as costume jewellery, which had found a limited market in India by the end of the 19th century. Naturally, Czechoslovak manufacturers were primarily interested in the great Indian market. During the world economic crisis they tried to compete with local firms (e. g. by deliveries of glass bangles), and, by these means, to keep their enterprises above water. Attempts were even made to establish factories on Indian territory, the aim being to exploit local manpower and raw material resources. Thus,

for instance, during the early 1930's the Baťa concern opened its first warehouse and later a shoe factory at Konnagar, to the north of Calcutta. In 1934 the building of another Baťa factory was commenced. By 1929 the volume of Indian exports to Czechoslovakia had reached the 100-million mark, while the value of imports amounted to about 27 million rupees. During the years of the world economic crisis, however, the figures dropped to about one-fourth. Lively trade contacts were reflected in frequent visits by Indian commercial representatives to Czechoslovakia. In the



Cartoon
of Tagore
by Adolf Hoffmeister,
1926

shoe factories at Zlín (Moravia), young Indian experts received their training, while occasional pompous appearances by Indian rajahs and their suites in the spas of West Bohemia and Slovakia created minor sensations. But on the whole Indo-Czechoslovak contacts were most significantly enhanced in the intellectual domain and by growing opportunities for first-hand appreciation of India's contemporary cultural values and her peoples' aspirations.

A profound impression was created in post-war Czechoslovakia by the visits of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the great Bengali poet, some of whose works had been introduced to the Czechoslovak public in translations before the war of 1914–8. Professor Vincenc Lesný, of Charles University, Prague, was the first European to have translated Tagore's verse directly from the Bengali original. Tagore's poetry has since found a permanent place in translated literature. Gradually Czech readers have been able to acquaint themselves with his literary output and personality in a representative selection, giving an insight into the society and cultural trends, with which the work remains bound up. The poet's first visit provided a strong impulse for the development of Indology in Prague. Vincenc Lesný met Tagore in October 1920 in London, where the poet had interrupted his journey from northern Europe to the United States. Moriz Winternitz wrote him to New York. Tagore promised both leading Prague Indologists to visit Czechoslovakia before his return to India. He fulfilled his promise at the end of the following spring, a season which could hardly have been selected more propitiously for making a first acquaintance with Prague, "The City of a Hundred Spires." On 18 June, the day of Tagore's arrival, Prague was decked out in greenery and blossoms. The short visit – which had to be extended as a result of the tremendous interest shown by the

public – was literally crammed with lectures, poetry recitals and meetings, which left the visitor little time for rest. A few hours after his arrival, Tagore was introduced by Professor Lesný and Bohumil Mathesius (1888–1952) to an audience packing the Great Aula of Charles University. After a ceremonious welcome and an introductory address by Professor Zubatý, the audience was addressed by Tagore, whose chair was profusely decorated with laurels and whose lecture (on Indian philosophy and religion) ended amid stormy ovations, as did his subsequent talks to students and the general public in Prague's biggest hall, the Lucerna. Tagore's every step in Prague was followed with friendly interest. The visit inspired many articles about the poet and his country. At that time memories of the Amritsar tragedy were still fresh, and Czechoslovak newspapers did not fail to remind their readers that, in protest, Tagore had renounced a British knighthood, conferred upon him in 1915.

Five years after the first visit, in the autumn of 1926, Rabindranath Tagore came to Prague for the second time, as the guest of the Czechoslovak writers. He was hailed not only as a famous poet and friend of Czechoslovakia but as an opponent of fascism and "propagator of ideas of a rapprochement between races and nations, whose work had had a powerful impact on European spiritual life during the period of post-war disintegration of cultural values". Tagore arrived in Prague via Berlin and Dresden on 9 October, in the company of some of his friends, including Prasanta Mahalanobis, an outstanding mathematician, and Ramanand Chatterjee, editor of *The Modern Review* (published in Calcutta), which carried detailed reports about the journey. Tagore spent a whole week in Czechoslovakia on this occasion, made an excursion into the Bohemian countryside and is said to have admired Mount Říp to the north of Prague, which

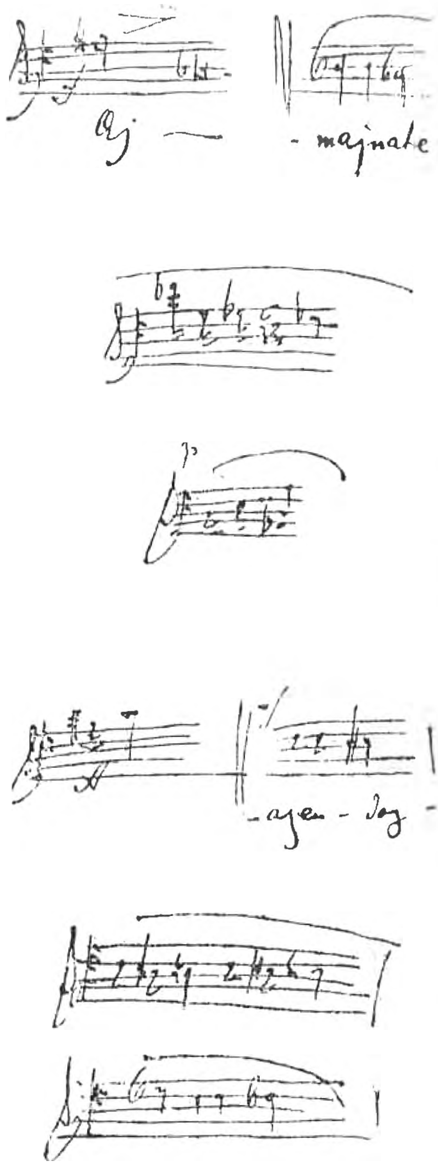
is associated with the Old Czech mythical tale of the arrival of the Slav tribe of the Czechs in their new, Central European settlements. He again delivered a lecture in capacity-filled Lucerna Hall, recited his verse at the National Theatre, spoke on the Czechoslovak Radio and attended a performance of his play, *The Post Office,* at the National Theatre. Later, in April 1930, Tagore paid a visit to the first President of Czechoslovakia, T. G. Masaryk, in a health resort near Nizza in France.

A lasting reminder of Tagore's visits and a testimony to the deep impression they made is a vocal composition to the words of Tagore's poem, *The Wandering Madman,* by Leoš Janáček (1854–1928), a leading representative of 20th-century European music. Tagore's verse inspired a number of love songs by another great Czech musician, Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951), besides stimulating the creative exertions of other European composers. Janáček met Tagore during his first visit to Czechoslovakia in 1921, attending his lectures and poetry recital. The impression made on him by Tagore's personality and work can perhaps be best characterised by an article the composer wrote, quite exceptionally, shortly after Tagore's visit, for the Brno paper *Lidové noviny* (The People's Daily): "The poet entered the hall silently. It seemed to me as if a white sacred flame flashed high above the heads of the many thousands present. He said: You should know how to read my poems – therefore I am speaking to you. It was not a speech – it sounded like a song of a nightingale, smooth, simple, void of any harshness of the diphthongs. It occured to me to fall in with a gay chord with the initial sounds of the poem he read out I heard soft harmonious voices or sounds, but it was incoherent to me. The melody kept on falling down in a torrent of tones. And the voice was permeated by the soft sorrow of

his song: It is time to go, Mother. Or by emotion: Here he comes, here he comes! And by the strong faith of his prayer: Will you, Father, let my country rise again to freedom?... He spoke to us in his language which we could not understand but from the sound alone we were able to recognise the bitter pain in his soul. I saw and heard the prophet of his people." To Janáček, whose life-long habit it was to jot down the intonations and rhythms of the idiom spoken in all regions and walks of life, which he sublimated in his original musical style, the melodious Bengali struck a familiar note: "The Indian language was smooth, free of any knot, from any split or sharp splinter. It sounded as if it came from a flute's love song. I venture to say that Moravian songs, such as coming from Makov and Turzovka, are being sung in the same way."

Janáček's composition, very exacting where interpretation is concerned but perfectly expressive of the balladic quality of Tagore's metaphor of a wandering madman, was completed on 1 November 1922 and given its first public performance by the famed *Moravian Teachers' Choir* on 21 September 1924. It occupies a prominent place among the composer's works.

Tagore's second visit to Czechoslovakia proved to be his last, but the fruitful literary and scholarly contacts which it promoted have lived on ever since. Even before the visit, the two leading Czechoslovak Indologists, Lesný and Winternitz, had spent some time at Shantiniketan, where they had been invited by Tagore, and Lesný soon paid a second visit. Like Professor Pertold before them, Lesný and Winternitz were able to make the best of their travels not only with a view to their research and university teaching work but for popularising contemporary India among the general public. In particular Lesný was an untiring and gifted translator and

Janáček's manuscript record of the speech-melody of Tagore's recitation in Bengali, 1921

author of a whole series of attractive books on Indian life and culture. Pertold's voluminous textbook of Hindustani was the first Czech manual of a modern Indian language, while for a long time Lesný's *Indie a Indové. Pouť staletími* (India and the Indians. A Pilgrimage Through the Centuries) continued to serve as the standard work on India in Czech literature.

In October 1931 another Prague Indologist, a pupil of Winternitz, Otto Stein (1893–1942), specialising in ancient Indian history and archaeology, left on an extensive study trip to India. As early as 1929 Winternitz and Stein together brought out the first issue of *Indologica Pragensia,* a learned journal, stressing in a preface that they "attach special importance to the closest connection with our Indian colleagues and friends". When the Editor of the Calcutta monthly *Prabuddha Bharata* asked Professor Stein (tortured to death by the German nazis during World War II) to contribute to this Brahma Samaj journal an article on Indian studies at Czechoslovak universities, the Prague scholar evaluated contemporary Czechoslovak Indology in a short passage which needs no retouching even today: "Taking into account the Czechoslovak Republic as a state of some 15 million inhabitants, one must confess that in her universities the representation of India's culture... can hardly be called inadequate, adding that Indology is not fostered by some egoistic motifs or is not a special lucrative source for those who devote their lives to it. We must rather appreciate the idealism and the economy of work by which it is able to reconstruct, from thousands of miles away, the complex edifice of a culture that we call India."

In 1925 India was visited by Aleš Hrdlička (1869 to 1943), world-famed anthropologist and a native of the south Bohemian town of Humpolec.

J. Nehru with his daughter Indira on their arrival in Prague on August 9, 1938 in the company of V. Lesný and A. C. N. Nambiar, journalist.

On June 10, 1958, Lidice Day was commemorated at a meeting of the Indo-Czechoslovak Cultural Society in Bombay.

The bell for Lidice,
a gift of the population of Bombay,
hangs in the bell tower
of the new Lidice cemetery.

But Indian scholars, too, came to Czechoslovakia, as did public personalities and artists. The Visitors' Book at the Oriental Institute in Prague is evidence that, as a rule, they seldom failed to call at this focal point of mutual contacts and study. Among their names we find those of Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, philologist; J. C. Bose, physicist, whose lectures at Charles University aroused extraordinary interest; historian Beni Prasad of Allahabad University; Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar of Calcutta, and a host of journalists and students. In 1936, from 18th to 25th July, Prague even became the venue of a Congress of Indian (and Ceylonese) students from all over Europe.

What in the twenties Tagore's visit had meant for Czechoslovak literary circles, appearances by Uday Shankar's dance ensemble emulated in the domains of music and dance during the thirties. This was the first time people in Prague and other Czechoslovak cities had occasion to appreciate the art of interpreters of ancient Indian dances performed to the accompaniment of an orchestra in which the musical genius Ravi Shankar made his first appearance in this country. The Indian guests presented their dances at dozens of performances in crowded theatres and concert halls to audiences who found them an unforgettable experience. The public was enraptured, while Uday Shankar fell in love with Prague, to which he returned time and again. These first tours by Indian dancers inspired a cycle of drawings, plates and oils by Jarmila Burghauserová. Her paintings and drawings are a noteworthy artistic achievement documenting the ability of Czech art to draw inspiration from Indian dances presented by an outstanding ensemble.

Yet Indo-Czechoslovak contacts in the domain of visual arts, linking up with the pre-war wanderings of Nejedlý and Hněvkovský in the south of India, went much further. Hněv-

Zdenka
Burghauserová's
portrait
of dancer
Uday Shankar
(a print)

kovský exhibited his pictures from southern India (mainly from Kerala) in 1921 in London. The one-man show was quite a success, earning him the title of "Slav Gauguin" and favourably impressing Rabindranath Tagore, who happened to be sojourning in London just then. Through Sir William Rothenstein, himself a painter, Tagore made Hněvkovský's acquaintance and invited him to his home at Shantiniketan. Thus, in 1922–3, Hněvkovský again visited India. At first he stayed at Tagore's Vishva Bharati, where he met some Indian artists working at Shantiniketan's Kala Bhavan, among them Nandalal Bose. Later he was again attracted by the Madras south. He painted a portrait of Shivaji and brought with him to Prague a number of canvases, among which he valued most several portraits of Tagore with their faithful rendering of the atmosphere of Shantiniketan. These pictures were exhibited in 1927 at the Aleš Hall in Prague. Nor did Hněvkovský's friend Nejedlý ever forget India. Until the last years of his life, he treated his friends and pupils to spiced disher of the Indian cuisine, which he strongly favoured. The genre painter and portraitist František Dvořák (1862–1927) was impressed by the reformist teachings of Swami Vivekananda, known also from Czech translations, and painted a series of portraits of Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission. The best known painting from this series is the portrait of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, placed in Belur Math (Howrah), reproductions of which can be frequently met with in India.

On his travels through South and South-eastern Asia, T. F. Šimon (1877–1942), a notable graphic artist, met and portrayed Indians. A first exhibition of Indian art was held in Prague in 1926, at which, among other exhibits, reproductions of frescos from Ajanta and north Indian miniatures from the 16th and 17th centuries could be seen alongside pictures

by contemporary painters, Nandalal Bose and Abanindranath Tagore. It is certainly interesting to note that Prague was the first Europan city to see an exhibition of paintings by Nicolas Roerich, arranged by the Mánes Art Club. A series of Roerichs's pictures was included in the Zbraslav Mansion collections at that time.

During the interwar period (1918–1938), the knowledge of Indian culture made headway in several directions. Interest in Indian art and learning went hand in hand with, and took shape against the background of, the growing response to India's fight for independence and the strong sympathy shown by the Czechoslovak public for its dramatic progress during the twenties and thirties. Indian events were commented on and explained by Prague's Indologists, too, in their many articles and literary portrayals of Indian national leaders. The systematic attention these scholars devoted to the Indian struggle is certainly to be appreciated, especially when we remember that the specialised nature of their work made contemporary political problems rather a remote matter for most of them. Some leading Indian politicians journeyed to Prague. As early as 1935 Jawaharlal Nehru was expected, but the visit did not take place due to the illness, and subsequent death, of Nehru's wife. Czechoslovakia was visited more than once by the Bengali politician Subhas Chandra Bose. The last important political visit to Czechoslovakia before the Munich Crisis of 1938 was paid by Mme Vijayalakshmi Pandit, then a Minister in the Congress Government of the United Provinces. The names of the Indian National Congress and of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had by then won a permanent place in newspaper headlines, while leftist circles took notice of the outstanding part played by the working-class movement in India's political life.

Gandhi's first work to appear in Czech translation was

Nithi Dharma (Ethical Religion), published in 1924. This was followed in 1931 by his autobiography *My Life*, with a preface by Professor Lesný, and by translations of his articles from *Young India, Navajiva* and others. Romain Rolland's life of *Mahatma Gandhi* was published twice in Czech translation (1925 and 1932). Interest in the policy of the Indian national movement was further reflected in a long series of newspaper articles on Gandhi and his new methods of non-violent struggle. Among their authors we find both Indians (for instance Indulal Yagnik, A. C. N. Nambiar, Subhas Chandra Bose and C. F. Andrews) and Czechoslovak Indologists as well as publicists and journalists. Professors Pertold, Winternitz and Lesný also devoted several studies to Gandhi and commented on Indian events, such as the "Salt March" and the Round Table Conferences. Of the most important publications and articles from the interwar period let us mention Lesný's *Směry indické politiky v posledních létech a Gándhího „nenásilná neúčast"* (Trends in Indian Policy During Recent Years and Gandhi's "Non-voilent Non-cooperation", Naše doba, Prague, 1923, *Gándhí a indický boj za osvobození* (Gandhi and the Indian Struggle for Liberation), Přítomnost, Prague, 1930, and *Gándhí a jeho obnovený boj za svobodu Indie* (Gandhi and His Renewed Fight for the Freedom of India), Demokratický střed, Prague, 1930; Winternitz's monograph on *Mahatma Gandhi* (Prague, 1930) and his contribution to The Golden Book of Tagore, *Some Thoughts on Ahimsa.* A slender book, entitled *Občianska neposlušnosť čo zbraň v boji o národnú slobodu v Indii* (Civic Disobedience as a Weapon in the Struggle for National Freedom in India), published in Slovak at Trnava in 1927, is further evidence of the extraordinarily lively response to Gandhi's political struggle outside his country. Articles and lectures by Europeans who had met Gandhi in

person or had been guests in his Ashram were avidly followed, irrespectively as to whether their authors were Czechs like Professor Josef L. Hromádka (born 1889) and Dr. Karel Hujer, or Werner Zimmermann, a Swiss writer.

No wonder then that the spontaneous interest in India and the growing trade and cultural contacts between the two countries called for a suitable organisational basis. On 27th April 1934, the Indian Association was founded in Prague, as part of the Oriental Institute, at a festive meeting under the chairmanship of Professor Vincenc Lesný. The meeting was attended by many Indian guests, among them Subhas Chandra Bose, who was then sojourning in Czechoslovakia. On Bose's initiative, while holding the office of President of the Indian National Congress, preparations were launched in the spring of 1938 for the foundation at Bombay of an analogous organisation, The Indo-Czechoslovak Society. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was at that time staying in Bombay prior to his departure for Europe, expressed the wish to become a member of the Society. A few months later the long-prepared visit of Nehru and his daughter Indira to Czechoslovakia took place: in the summer of 1938, in a political situation made tense by dramatic events which ultimately led up to the Munich Agreement on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Nehru's visit and his action in defence of Czechoslovak freedom and democracy undoubtedly climaxed the development of mutual relationships between India and Czechoslovakia before World War II.

8 A FRIEND IN NEED

Through the troubled history of man
Comes sweeping a blind fury of destruction
And the towers of civilization topple down to dust.
In the chaos of moral nihilism
Are trampled underfoot by marauders
The best treasures of Man heroically won by the martyrs for ages.

Come, young nations,
Proclaim the right for freedom,
Raise up the banner of invincible faith.
Build bridges with your life across the gaping earth
Blasted by hatred,
And march forward.

Do not submit yourself to carry the burden of insult upon your head,
Kicked by terror,
And dig not a trench with falsehood and cunning
To build a shelter for your dishonoured manhood;
Offer not the weak as sacrifices to the strong
To save yourself.

AHBAN (A Call), R. Tagore, 1. April, 1939

THE END of the nineteen-thirties brought little hope to mankind. Black clouds of fascist lust for world supremacy were gathering over Asia, Africa and Europe. In these tense and turbulent times, as if in anxious expectancy of approaching catastrophe, a Christmas greeting was flashed from Czechoslovakia to India through the ether. Karel Čapek (1890–1938), one of the world's leading writers, was addressing over Radio Prague a great Indian poet and his country.

Čapek's message was an expression of respect, confidence and friendly feeling.

"Tagore, a great master," said Čapek in his native Czech, translated for the hearer's benefit by Professor Lesný, "a harmonious voice of the East, we greet you in your Shantiniketan; we greet you from Czechoslovakia, where snow is falling, from a Europe in which we are feeling lonely, from the Western World where not even the most developed nations can shake one another's hand in brotherly greeting. And yet despite the distance between our countries and cultures, we are extending a fraternal hand to you, to you, poet of sweet wisdom, to your peaceable Shantiniketan, to your great India, to your immense Asia, to that Asia, too, which is being laid waste by weapons invented in the West. At a moment when at both the easternmost and the westernmost fringes of our common continent guns are thundering, a tiny voice of Western Democracy is calling to you at the close of the year: May the World live on, but let it be a world of equal and free people!"

And far away in the East, in the plains of Bengal, in his Vishva Bharati, the addressee heard Čapek's words. His answer arrived in Prague shortly afterwards: "Friends in Czechoslovakia! In the terrible storm of hatred and violence raging over humanity accept the goodwill of an old idealist who clings to his faith in the common destiny of the East and West and all people on the Earth. Rabindranath."* Thus Tagore was the first Indian who publicly proclaimed his friendly concern for Czechoslovakia at the very beginning of that country's heavy trials.

During the following year, 1938, and especially after the *Anschluss* of Austria by Hitler Germany, when Czecho-

* Retranslated from Czech

slovakia was immediately threatened, expressions of solidarity with the last democratic state in Central Europe grew in numbers alongside an increasing opposition by the democratically-minded public to the Western Powers' policy of appeasement. The summer of 1938 saw a number of political campaigns and public meetings, in particular in Great Britain and France, entailing lively discussions of Czechoslovakia's defence against imminent aggression. In these talks the voice of India could be heard more than once: at the *Conference on Peace and the Empire*, held in London, and at the *Conference on the Bombardment of Open Towns and the Restoration of Peace,* in Paris, India's point of view was expressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, then active in Europe, who closely followed political developments and untiringly campaigned against the policy of appeasing the aggressor.

Before his departure from India, Nehru had categorically declined an official invitation to visit Germany, just as previously he had refused a meeting with Benito Mussolini, the Italian dictator. On the other hand, he had resolved to go to Czechoslovakia, as he explained later, "to express my sympathy for this country and see its situation with my own eyes". Before his arrival in Czechoslovakia, he gave an interview in Paris to the correspondent of the Prague daily *Rudé právo,* stating openly his opinions on the outstanding issues of world politics and on Indian developments, in which, of course, Czech readers were greatly interested. Shortly after the interview, on 9th August 1938, he arrived in the company of his daughter Indira in Czechoslovakia, where he spent a week. He made the best of his short sojourn, had many meetings with representatives of Czechoslovak public opinion, made several excursions to various places in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, visited minority regions and talked with both ordinary people and journalists. He found

RUDÉ PRÁVO

STŘEDNÍ ORGÁN KOMUNISTICKÉ STRANY ČESKOSLOVENSKA

EKCE KOMUNISTICKÉ INTERNACIONÁLY) (PROLETÁŘI VŠECH ZEMÍ SPOJTE SE!)

Cena Kč 1·-

V neděli

31. července 1938

Číslo 178

Rozmluva s vůdcem Indů, J. Nehru

Vůdce 350 milionů přijíždí do Československa

Španělska

Tisíciletá přátelství

Paris interview of J. Nehru printed in *Rudé právo* (July, 1938)
One of a series of articles written by Nehru for the *National Herald* at the time of the Munich crisis (October 1, 1938)
A reprint of an article by Nehru in the Urdu weekly *Kirti Lahar* published in Meerut (October 9, 1938)

THE GREAT BETRAYAL

(BY JAWAHARLAL NEHRU)

PARIS, Sept. 32.

"We have been abandoned, betrayed" cried a vast multitude of the Czechoslovakian people in their agony. News had come that their cabinet, after nearly forty-eight hours of almost continuous pressure of the British and French Governments. Step by step they had accepted Lord Runciman's proposals, they had swallowed every bitter pill, hoping that when crisis came these Governments would stand by them. They had even finally agreed to the full plan sions which will have full play in the days to come. War could have been stopped and stopped for long if these Governments had really wished it by their building a peace front against the Nazi aggression. But they preferred to side with the Nazis and the

time to pay a visit to the Oriental Institute and Charles University and admired the historic quarters of Prague. Thus, within a short time, Nehru was able to gain a fairly deep insight into the country's political life and public opinion. He found full justification for his belief that peace could not be saved by concession to the Nazi aggressors and became convinced that the people of Czechoslovakia were firmly resolved to defend their democratic system. On the other hand, the visit was instrumental in spreading knowledge throughout Czechoslovakia of the policy of the Indian National Congress and of general conditions in India. These topics were discussed in private talks and at meetings with journalists and were diligently reported by the daily press. Interviews with the Indian guest were printed under such captions as *India Against Dictatorship* (Lidové noviny) or *Pandit Nehru Declares: India Will Never Help Fascism* (Právo lidu). From Nehru's talk with the editor of *Prager Tagblatt* readers were able to learn about India's view of Japanese aggression in China and about the attitude of the Indian National Movement to contemporary problems in Europe and to an armed conflict, should it occur, in this part of the world. It is interesting that Nehru's hypothetical statement on the Indian attitude in the event of a war in Europe fully tallied with the attitude adopted by Congress after the outbreak of the war following year.

The special correspondent of the Allahabad daily, *The Leader,* whose full reports informed the Indian public about Nehru's stay in Czechoslovakia who, like Reuter's correspondent, interviewed Nehru before his leave-taking, wrote that the visit "has given the newspapers an occasion to show how deeply the people of Czechoslovakia appreciate the presence of the Indian leader amongst them, particularly at this time. His outspoken frankness, his clear analysis of the situation

and his charming personality, have created in the minds of the people a very great sympathy for India . . ." This was confirmed by all who had a chance of talking to Nehru.

Nehru himself summed up his impressions from his visit in a letter to the Editor of *The Manchester Guardian*, published on 12th September 1938: "Recently I spent some time in Czechoslovakia and came into contact with numerous people, both Czech and German. I returned full of admiration for the admirable temper of the Czechs and the democratic Germans, who, in face of grave danger and unexampled bullying, kept calm and cheerful, eager to do everything to preserve peace, and yet fully determined to keep their independence. As events have shown, they are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to satisfy every minority claim and preserve peace, but everybody knows that the question at issue is not a minority one. If it was a love of minority rights that moved people, why do we not hear of the German minority in Italy or the minorities in Poland? The question is one of power politics and the Nazi desire to break the Czecho-Soviet alliance, to put an end to the one democratic state in Central Europe, to reach the Russian oil fields and wheat, and thus to dominate Europe. British policy has encouraged this and tried to weaken that democratic State... All our sympathies are with Czechoslovakia . . ."

While the crisis was reaching its climax in Europe, on 28th September the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress was in session at Harijan Colony in Delhi. A special resolution was passed stressing that India, herself at war with the biggest imperialist power in the world, was taking a lively interest in the fate of Czechoslovakia and sending her courageous people a message of deep sympathy for their fight for the preservation of freedom. The President of the Congress then sent a special telegram, containing

expressions of personal regards and admiration, to inform the President of the Czechoslovak Republic about the resolution.

At that time the Indian press carried many reports and reflections about the final phase of the policy of appeasement in which both the leaders of the Congress and a large majority of India's public opinion unequivocally sided with Czechoslovakia. Undoubtedly this was to a great extent due to Nehru's articles in which he, almost daily, reacted to European developments. These articles regularly appeared in the Lucknow daily *National Herald* and were reprinted by periodicals published in various Indian vernaculars. They are evidence of political perspicacity. Problems pertaining to Czechoslovakia were discussed in connection with the Indian national liberation movement, due lessons being drawn from Czechoslovak experience. The author followed the developments from close at hand. As a spectator he attended the session of the League of Nations in Geneva, at which the threat to Czechoslovakia was discussed. The most dramatic moments found him in Paris. After the news of the mobilisation order issued by the Prague Government reached Nehru, he immediately sent the President of the Republic Dr. Beneš an encouraging telegram on behalf of the Indian people. He was also present in the House of Commons in London when the British Prime Minister announced Hitler's invitation to Munich. The same day he summed up his impressions of Chamberlain's speech in an article headed *London in Suspense:* "Was there going to be another betrayal again, the final murder of that [Czechoslovak] nation? This sinister gathering of four at Munich, was it the prelude to the Four Power Pact of Fascism-cum-Imperialism to isolate Russia, to end Spain finally and to crush all progressive elements? Mr. Chamberlain's past record inevitably makes one think so."

And, indeed, in a short time Nehru's worst apprehensions were fully borne out by the Munich Agreement. In contrast to many other parts of the British Empire, neither Nehru nor Indian nationalist public opinion as a whole ever succumbed to illusions about "saving peace" by sacrificing democratic Czechoslovakia. Thus for instance the *Bombay Chronicle* summed up its evaluation of the situation resulting from the Munich Agreement in the following words: "The Munich Agreement has averted war only to render a more dangerous war inevitable." After all, unlike the British-owned dailies and some Muslim League newspapers, the Indian nationalist press had already more than once expressed the view that united front of the Great Powers would be in a position to call a halt to Hitler aggression.

The occupation of the border regions of Czechoslovakia was indignantly condemned by Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit, a Minister in the Congress Government, who paid a brief visit to Prague at the beginning of September 1938. During the Munich crisis she was in London and declared at one of her public appearances there: "...the fate of Czechoslovakia has made us more determined than ever to achieve our aim and sever connection with a Government whose ideals differ from ours."

The fate of Czechoslovakia during those eventful days inspired Mahatma Gandhi's discourses at evening prayer assemblies and his articles published in the *Harijan.* He, too, was deeply shocked by the course of action adopted by the Nazis, voicing his belief that no other path had been left open to the Czechoslovaks after their desertion by their Western allies. He confessed that he had been touched by the plight of the Czechs to the point of physical and mental distress, but that he had felt that it would have been cowardly on his part not to have shared with them the thoughts

that had been welling up within him. His reaction betrays the attitude of a believer in, and teacher of, non-violence, one who recognised no differences between the situation in India and in Europe. In his article *If I Were a Czech,* he identified himself with attacked Czechoslovakia and advocated a course of action in which he placed a sacrifice to the idea of non-violence higher than the victory of brute force as well as armed resistance to that force. In his reflections and discussions he developed an alternative possibility for countering Nazi aggression by a policy of non-violence. At that time Gandhi's reflections and counsels struck an unrealistic note and, moreover, their significance was theoretical rather than practical. Yet they were an interesting projection of his concept of non-violence into the solution of world issues, having obviously been motivated by a deep belief in the universality of the principles of *Satyagraha.*

A broken, yet not hopeless, voice was again heard from Shantiniketan. Rabindranath Tagore made a fiery protest, desiring to keep his place among those who offered encouragement and consolation. Shortly after the Munich Agreement he telegraphed the President of the Czechoslovak Republic: "I can only offer profound sorrow and indignation on behalf of India and of myself at the conspiracy of betrayal that has suddenly flung your country into a tragic depth of isolation, and I hope that this shock will kindle a new life into the heart of your nation leading her to a moral victory and to an unobstructed opportunity of a perfect self-attainment." Shortly after he sent his friend Lesný in Prague a long letter, which also appeared in Indian and British newspapers. The poet identified himself with the Czechoslovak people in their suffering "as one of them" and sharply condemned the betrayal of the principles of humanity and democracy. Tagore's letter ends with the following words: "As for your own

J. Nehru at a reception given in his honour by the President
of the Czechoslovak Republic, Antonín Zápotocký,
in Prague Castle, June 1955. Meeting Professor O. Pertold.

J. Nehru, then Prime Minister of India,
visited Czechoslovakia for the second time in June 1955 with Indira Gandhi.

Indian topics are frequently discussed in *New Orient Bimonthly*, published by the Czechoslovak Society for Eastern Studies.

A selection of recent books on India by Czech and Slovak authors

Indian film directors and actors with A. M. Brousil,
Chairman of the International Jury of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 1954.
Members of the music and dance ensemble including Tara Chaudhuri, Mira Chatterji, Ravi Shankar, Asha Singh Mastana and others after a performance during a tour of Czechoslovakia in 1954.

An exhibition of Indian art in Brno,
the metropolis of Moravia, at the beginning of 1955.

Maqbool Fida Hussain
opening his one-man show in Prague, 1956

Hussain's drawing from West Bohemia.

B. K. Acharya, the Ambassador of the Republic of India,
A. Hoffmeister and L. Hájek attended
the inauguration of an exhibition of Ajit Chakravarti's work
done in Prague, 1961.

Ravi Shankar thanks the audience after his concert in the course of the Prague Spring international music festival, 1960.

Zubin Mehta conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the close of the Prague Spring Festival in 1963.

A concert of songs by Czechoslovak composer to words by R. Tagore was given during the Prague Spring Festival as part of the centenary celebrations, 1961.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the Tagore's birth, the poet's portrait was drawn by M. Švabinský.

Janáček's vocal composition,
The Wandering Madman, to words by R. Tagore,
was performed by the Smetana Choir at the House
of Artists in Prague in 1966.

country, I can only hope that though abandoned and robbed, it will maintain its native integrity and, falling back upon its own inalienable resources, will recreate a richer national life than before."

In his literary work Tagore reacted to the betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich by the bitter poem called *Prayaschitta* (Penance), written in 1938, whose original version (in Bengali) he sent to Professor Lesný early the following year:

In the upper sky, lamped by science,
the night forgets itself,
while in the underground gloom
lean hunger and bloated voracity
crush against each other
till the earth begins to tremble
and the pillars of triumph
are perilously cracked,
swaying on the brink of gaping gulfs.
Do not howl in fear
or angrily judge God,
let the swelling evil burst itself in pain
and vomit out its accumulated filth.

When the victims of a carnivorous rage
are dragged by the competition of ravenous fangs,
let the hideousness of the blood-soaked blasphemy
arouse divine anger heralding a heroic peace
out of an awful retribution.

They throng in the church
in a primitive frenzy of faith made keen by fear
which hopes to flatter their God

into a complacent mood
into a feebleness of leniency.
They feel half sure that peace will be brought down
into this demented earth
by the mere volume of their wailing
uttered in sacred text.

They have confidence in their indulgent God
who may send them timely wisdom
to divert all sacrifices needed for the worship
towards the less strong,
leaving their own soiled hoardings undivided.

But let us hope,
for the sake of the dignity of moral justice in this world
that God will never suffer to be cheated of His due
by the miserly manipulation of a diplomatic piety
carefully avoiding all costs to itself,
that a terrible penance may have to be passed through
to its ultimate end,
leaving no remnant of poison
in a treacherously healing scar.

In the covering letter Tagore mentioned that he had been given detailed information by Nehru about the tragic events in Central Europe at a meeting with the statesman a few days before reiterating his hope "that your brave people will not lose heart and you will not fail to rebuild once again your own future". When later the rump of Czechoslovakia was occupied by the German army, Tagore wrote his poem *Ahban* (A Call), which he sent to Canada.

The historical confrontation of the destinies of India and Czechoslovakia during the political crisis which eventually

opened the door to a world war, revealed the basic common orientation and the unity of interests of the peoples of both countries. The Indian fight for national liberation was also obliged to take into account the situation that arose in international relations after the Munich Agreement and the subsequent occupation of Czechoslovakia. Congress leaders frequently stressed how important it was for Indians to learn from political experience accumulated during these crucial years. The events of 1938-1939 have left an indelible memory among whole generations in both India and Czechoslovakia. This can be sensed in the words of a great idealistic philosopher, and later President of the Republic of India, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, who declared in a wartime message to Czechoslovakia: "Along with all lovers of freedom in the world, I have watched the struggle of the great Czechoslovak people for freedom, and the torture and anxiety through which they have passed. They are loyal to the famous tradition of John Hus who faced anguish and death rather than deny the truth of God as he understood it.

"Your country, though it has been under a terrorist regime and converted into a huge concentration camp, since March 1939, has still kept its spirit alive. The end of the war is drawing nearer and the liberation of peoples is at hand. Your wearied bodies will soon be restored to health and your spirit, which is untarnished, will assume for itself a suitable form."

The same attitude underlies the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, when as the first Prime Minister of free India he introduced the Prague edition of his *Autobiography* to the Czechoslovak reading public: "It is nearly twenty years since I visited Czechoslovakia; it was at the time of a great distress, disturbance and danger for the Czechoslovak people who were living in the shadow of an impending tragedy.

I remember that visit well and also the sympathy I felt with the fate of the Czechoslovak people. Then the tragedy came, followed by the war and later on the defeat of those who attacked this country.

"While I am writing this preface my thoughts fly back to that gloomy time twenty years ago and I recollect all that has happened since. I firmly hope that international disputes will never more be solved by war and that hatred and force will gradually cease to rule over international relations."*

During World War II the nazi terror aimed against the population of occupied Czechoslovakia was sharply condemned throughout India. Deep sympathy was evoked by the tragic fate of the men, women and children of the mining village of Lidice, a short distance to the west of Prague, wiped out by the nazis in 1942. As everywhere in the world, Lidice became a symbol in India of the many towns and villages destroyed with equal brutality by the German overlords. In the new Lidice Cemetery one can see today a bell with the inscription BOMBAY engraved upon it. This is a gift by the Indian friends of Czechoslovakia, purchased from the proceeds of a collection, a United Nations Day Campaign, organised in India in 1943.

The sympathy and support from Indian public opinion, which the Czechoslovak people earned during their nations' ordeal, have become a landmark in the friendship of the two countries and will always be remembered in Czechoslovakia. This period in their relations also prepared the new stage, when after the dark days of the war both the Indians and the Czechoslovaks regained their national independence. At last the door was opened wide to true understanding.

* Retranslated from Czech.

The London celebration of Nehru's birthday (in 1940) was a protest against his imprisonment in Dehra Dun.
Czechoslovak friends of India were represented by B. Biheller

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9 TWENTY YEARS OF ENCOUNTERS WITH INDEPENDENT INDIA

OUTLINES OF THIS type can, as a rule, hardly be more than an enumeration of events, names, dates and facts. Also in reviewing the story of how India has been studied and how knowledge about her has spread in Czechoslovakia over the past 20 years, we could not avoid the above danger, if we were to aim at giving a comprehensive survey of all factors which have brought, since the second World War, the two nations more closely together than ever before.

When, in 1947, India again took her place among the sovereign nations of the world, diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia were established for the first time in history. After the Czechoslovak embassy had been opened in New Delhi, the first Ambassador of the Republic of India presented his credentials to the Czechoslovak President at Prague Castle in 1948. It soon became apparent that the two countries were with increasing frequency taking similar attitudes in the field of international politics, to such questions as strengthening world peace and resolving outstanding issues. This is quite natural, since both countries are vitally interested in peaceful economic development and steady social growth. Thus one of the principles shared by the Governments of both countries is the consistent policy of peaceful coexistence, work for general disarmament and elimination of war as a means for resolving international differences. This principle has also served as the basis of mutual relations in the diplomatic, economic and cultural fields, allowing for broadly based cooperation and exchanges.

Friendly contacts have received their outward expression in numerous state visits. In 1955 Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi paid an official visit to Czechoslovakia. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan came to this country twice, in 1957 and 1965, in his capacities as Vice-President and President of the Republic of India respectively, in addition to visits

by other Indian Government representatives and leading politicians. Sojourns of Czechoslovak statesmen in India have been further landmarks on the path of developing cooperation. This applies, above all, to both visits by Czechoslovak Prime Ministers, in 1958 and 1965. Autumn 1966 saw the first official reception in India of the President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, as its supreme constitutional representative.

The friendly atmosphere in official relations as well as the long-standing tradition of mutual contacts and sympathies have increased interest in India to an unprecedented degree, and provided new opportunities for the Czechoslovak public to gain more knowledge of India. This knowledge has been enhanced by frequent visits by Czechs and Slovaks. What before the war was exceptional has now become almost commonplace. If before the war an Indian turban or sari aroused curiosity in the streets of the capital, today it is by no means an unusual sight even in a district town.

Intensive economic cooperation has created opportunities for more contacts between Indians and Czechoslovaks, leading to lasting personal acquaintances and friendships. The expanding economic cooperation is free from ulterior political motives and strategic designs, being aimed at exploiting the two countries' mutually complementary conditions for the common benefit: on the one hand India has practically unlimited mineral resources and, on the other, the developing economy of a relatively small country with extensive engineering output suffers a chronic shortage of raw materials. Moreover, the economies of the two countries are guided by long-term plans, which introduces an element of stability into exchanges of goods, besides making for steady expansion. Both countries have identical attitudes to many problems of economic growth. On the whole the development of Indo-

Czechoslovak trade may by regarded as promising. Whereas by the middle of the Indian first five-year plan the total value of trade with Czechoslovakia amounted to 32 million rupees, by 1965 (i. e. eleven years later) it had increased elevenfold, reaching the 660-million mark in 1966. Calculated in the pre devaluation currency, this means a yearly rise by almost 17 per cent. In the structure of Indian exports Czechoslovakia's interest in importing manufactured goods and engineering products is slowly beginning to assert itself.

According to an agreement on economic cooperation. Czechoslovakia has offered India long-term credits for the construction of large industrial enterprises (in 1959 to the value of 231 million rupees and in 1964, 400 million) and made a gift of 6 million rupees for building and equipping the Central Machine Tools Institute at Bengalore. The Long Term Trade and Payments Agreement from 1963, which is to remain in force until 1968, envisages a steady increase in commercial relations. To ensure this trend, an Inter-Governmental Committee for Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation was founded in 1966.

Currently Czechoslovakia is supplying complete plant equipments and machinery, affording specialised technical aid and is helping to train engineers on the construction sites of more than thirty industrial plants. The foundry forge plant, built with Czechoslovak participation and, in part, in operation at Ranchi, is the biggest undertaking of this type in the whole of South and South-East Asia. Other factories built with Czechoslovak assistance are also of paramount importance for creating the basis of heavy industry in India. The following may be mentioned as typical examples: the Heavy Machine Tool Plant at Ranchi, the Heavy Electrical Equipment Factory at Hyderabad, the High Pressure Boiler Works at Tiruchirapalli, the Thermal Power Plant at Ennore,

the Steel Casting and Forging Plant at Wardha, the Iron Casting Plant at Jabalpur and a factory for grinding machines at Ajmer.

Intensive trade contacts between distant partners are, of course, greatly served by direct transport connections. Sea transport plays the leading role where heavy shipments are concerned. To an increasing extent Indo-Czechoslovak trade relies on the Czechoslovak merchant fleet, whose ships call ever more frequently at Indian ports. Of considerable importance for bridging the distance between the two countries is the direct air connection between Prague and Bombay (and also Calcutta), operated since the spring of 1956 by Air India International and since 1959 also by Czechoslovak Airlines. Thanks to modern planes, the distance between Prague and Bombay has been reduced to a mere 9 flight hours.

All this means in practice that thousands of Czech and Slovak engineers and workers, accompanied by their families, spend long periods in India, become acquainted with her living conditions and culture, about which they previously learned only from books and films, and make many friends among the Indian people. When they return to their homes and factories in their country, they bring back with them novel impressions and experiences. On the other hand young Indian engineers frequently receive specialised training in Czechoslovak enterprises. As most learn Czech and Slovak fairly well during their stay, they can do a lot in spreading knowledge of India among their new Czechoslovak colleagues.

Thanks to an agreement from November 1966 on cooperation on the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, Indo-Czechoslovak contacts can be followed also in this most up-to-date domain of scientific research.

In April the same year a comprehensive agreement had been signed in New Delhi on joint research, exchanges, organisational matters and sending delegates to conferences on scientific and technological topics. The agreement was concluded by representatives of the Indian Council of Sciences. In the field of scientific contacts, as part of broadly based cultural exchanges, a number of visits have been made by leading scholars and scientists as well as young research workers in diverse fields of the humanities, social, natural and technical sciences. These contacts have, since 1959, been based on an inter-state agreement and, since 1965, on specific yearly plans of cultural exchanges.

The culmination of the Indian struggle for freedom and the achievement of independence in 1947 provided a powerful stimulus to the further development and differentiation of Indian studies in Czechoslovakia. After the war, however, Czechoslovak Indology suffered two heavy losses. In 1953 Professor Lesný died, from 1945 Director of the Oriental Institute in Prague and later a member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Shortly afterwards premature death carried away Professor Oldřich Friš (1903–1955), an outstanding specialist in Sanskrit and translator from Ancient Indian literature. On the other hand, growing interest in India has swelled the ranks of young adepts of Indian studies, with pedagogical activities making further strides forward to maturity and comprehensiveness.

The first important step in this direction was the introduction of the study of modern Indian languages at the Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University (and temporarily also at Palacký University in the Moravian city of Olomouc) in 1950, when teaching of Hindi (Urdu) and Bengali was started, later followed by courses of Tamil and Malayalam. Especially as regards linguistic studies in Hindi (Vincenc

Pořízka, born 1905) and Tamil (Kamil Zvelebil, born 1927), Prague soon became one of Europe's leading centres.

The incorporation of the Oriental Institute in 1952 in the newly created Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, as a purely academic institution, was an event of far-reaching significance. For the first time in Czechoslovak history an Indological research centre came into being, and organisation and material conditions were provided for a considerable expansion of scholarly activities. The South Asia Department of the Oriental Institute, headed first by Pavel Poucha (born 1905) and since 1958 by Dušan Zbavitel (born 1925), is currently the greatest centre of Indian studies in Central Europe, many of its members engaging in teaching capacities in local and foreign universities.

Expansion of research facilities has enabled individual scholars to undertake greater methodological specialisation. Thus gradually the former stress on traditional philology has been supplanted by specialisation in ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary history, in modern languages. literatures, philosophy, anthropology, visual arts and economic studies. Moreover, this division of work facilitates a comprehensive approach to the solution of certain specific research problems.

Lastly, plans for cultural cooperation with Indian institutions and ample scope for mutual contacts have opened up new opportunities for students of Indology and post-graduate students, who now have access to original sources and can consult Indian specialists early in their research careers.

One aspect has, however, remained unchanged: the traditional participation of both older and young scholars in popularising India and her culture among the general public. It can even be said that this share has greatly increased thanks

also to modern mass media, more generous editoral policies, the general spread of education and intensification of cultural life. Nearly 200 books on India have appeared in Czech and Slovak editions over the past two decades. For the most part they have been written, translated, or edited by Indologists. Czechoslovak scholars are responsible for a fairly large number of popular books, ranging from general publications and a team work on Hinduism to historical outlines, biographies, travelogues and children's books. Indian themes have found a prominent place in the two leading popular-scientific journals of Oriental studies, *Nový Orient*, published in Czech and Slovak by the Oriental Institute, and *New Orient Bimonthly*, published in English by the Czechoslovak Society for Eastern Studies. Indologists continue to work as sensitive and fully competent interpreters of India's ancient and modern literatures.

Czechoslovakia is one of the few countries where it has become a rule to translate Indian prose and poetry direct from the language of the original and where the publication of Sanskrit and Pali literature is offset by versions of works from old Tamil literature. Selections from the modern writing of the Indian north have a worthy counterpart in examples of the contemporary literary output in the Dravidian south. Translations from Indian languages are so popular with the reading public that even when a book is published in an edition of 50,000 copies it may be completely sold out within a few weeks.

It would be a sheer impossibility to print here a complete list of books translated into Czech and Slovak since the end of the war. Let us mention only some of the most interesting examples. Work in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali have found their interpreters mainly in Oldřich Friš (Vedic Hymns, Hala, Kalidasa, Amaru, Bhartrihari, Bilhana, Val-

mik etc.), Ivo Fišer (born 1929; Jatakas, Shudraka) and Pavel Poucha (Dandin, Kalidasa).

Although many tales, examples of literary folk-lore, poems and stories have been translated from Hindi (Mahendra Bhatnagar, Amrit Rai, Harshanath, Kedar, Yashpal, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Sumitranandan Pant, Agyeya, Harinvansh Rai Bachchan, Girijakumar Mathur etc.) mostly by Odolen Smékal (born 1928), only two novels (by Prem Chand) have so far appeared in the Czech and Slovak versions of O. Smékal and N. Pucková (born 1935).

Urdu literature is also represented by a fairly large number of translations. Thus for instance Jan Marek (born 1931) has provided Czech versions of works by Nazir Akbarabadi, Mir Amman Dihlavi, Muhammad Quli Qutubshah, Krishan Chandar, Mirza Rafai Sauda, Josh Malihabadi, Raziya Sajjad Zaheer and others). Milena Hübschmannová (born 1933) translates books by Ghalib, Sardar Ali Jaffri, Kaifi Azmi, Sahir Ludhianvi and others. Nasir Ahmad Zoberi, an Indian living in Bratislava, is responsible for translations into Slovak of books by K. A. Abbas, Krishnan Chandar, Majaz, Rajendar Singh Bedi etc.

Translations from Bengali have, of course, a long-standing tradition, ranking among the most popular in the country. This is almost exclusively to be credited to Dušan Zbavitel, an outstanding expert on Tagore's work, modern Bengali writing and literary folklore. Thanks to him, the so far fragmentary selection of Tagore's writings in Czech and Slovak versions have been greatly augmented by translations of novels, plays, stories and poetry and of Tagore's speeches and letters, thanks to which the Czechoslovak public has obtained a fuller picture of his personality. To mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Tagore's birth, Zbavitel brought out a voluminous anthology for which he was awarded a

special Tagore memorial medal. He also devotes himself to translating books by other modern authors (e. g. Manik Bandyopadhyay, Sukanta Bhattacharya, Narayan Ganguli. Premendra Mitra, Samaresh Basu, Nani Bhaumik, Subhas Mukhopadhyay, Amiya Chakrabarti, the East Bengali writer Abu Ishaq) and populars ballads.

The appearance of Dravidian poetry and prose in Czech and Slovak translated literature has been as sudden as it has been revealing. For this the Czechoslovak reading public is above all indebted to Kamil Zvelebil, whose name has remained bound up, since the early 1950's, with vivid translations of ancient and modern Tamil literature and of works in Malayalam. Thanks to his untiring efforts, old Tamil lyrics have found a permanent place in Czechoslovakia, as have works by modern authors, such as Subrahmanya Baradi. Pudumeippittan, T. M. Sidambaru Ragunadan, T. Janakiraman, Baradidasan, Turan, Vallattol, S. K. Pottehkatt, Takazhi Shivashankar Pillai and several others. Translations of these works have opened up new vistas to Czech and Slovak readers, revealing to them hitherto unknown horizons of Indian literary culture.

Recent translations include the first examples of Punjabi and Marathi works. Indian authors writing in English have also gained popularity with Czech and Slovak readers. The best known is Mulk Raj Anand but books by Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Raja Rao and others have also appeared.

It is certainly understandable why a certain overeagerness and lack of discrimination was evident in the selection of literary genres and authors when translations from Indian literatures were avidly embarked upon after the war. The same criticism might also apply to the choice of examples from India's classical literary heritage. But in most cases

the Indilogists were really lucky in their decisions. Extraordinary interest and a fine team of translators are a guarantee that the number of translations is hardly likely to diminish in future editorial plans. And it is gratifying that examples from Czechoslovak literature have also been published in postwar India. So far the most widely known are *Notes from the Gallows* by Julius Fučík a Czech journalist murdered by the Nazis), published in an English version and in a number of Indo-European and Dravidian languages. Translations based directly on Czech originals have recently been brought out by Nirmal Verma, a young writer and expert on modern Czechoslovak writing, whose Hindi version of Otčenášek's novela *Romeo, Juliet and the Darkness* appeared in 1964, a selection of short stories by Karel Čapek in 1966. Currently Nirmal Verma is working on other translations from Czech literature. Bengali versions of fairy tales by Božena Němcová, a selection of Čapek's short stories and other translations have been contributed by Milada and Mohanlan Ganguli. The former is the author of several books on India published in Czech and the last named has also written two books on Czechoslovakia, one of which is a successful travelogue: *Punardarshanayacha* (Au Revoir, 1965).

Performances of Indian music and dances are no longer rare events. The famous visits by Uday Shankar's ensemble have been followed by numerous performances by classical and folk-dance groups, accompanied by musicians and soloists. In 1949 Prague was visited by Uday and Amala Shankar, who gave showings for experts of their film *Kalpana*. The year 1954 witnessed a tour by a large ensemble of Indian musicians and dancers. Many other Indian artists have since made successful appearances in the country, some returning to it time and again. Thanks to these visits audiences have been able to see the main classical dances, Bha-

rata Natyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Manipuri, also examples of Tagore's Shantiniketan dancing school, as well as popular and tribal dances. Examples of both Carnatic and Hindustani music have been performed. Indian performers of Western music have appeared at the world-famous music festival, the Prague Spring. In 1963 the concluding festival concert, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, was conducted by Zubin Mehta. During their tours of India, Czech and Slovak musicologists, soloists and members of orchestras (e. g. the Czech Philharmonic), chamber ensembles (e. g. the Smetana Quartet) or song and dance ensembles (e. g. SĽUK) became acquainted with India's musical and dance culture.

Many Indian dramas have been presented to Czechoslovak audiences – Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* (1959), Shudraka's *The Clay Cart* and Tagore's *Chitrangada* (1961) – in addition to performances by the Bengali puppeteer Prasanna Rao. During their tours of India, Czechoslovak puppeteers studied the Indian art of marionettes, wayangs and shadow-puppets (the Radost and Skupa Puppet Theatre ensembles toured India not long ago). Theatre experts and members of the Bratislava Mime Theatre became acquainted with Indian dramas at the East West Theatre Festival at New Delhi in 1966.

As regards Indian visual arts – classical, modern and folk art – the growing interest of the Czechoslovak public has been catered for not only by many exhibitions sent over from India but also by permanent and temporary displays arranged by the two leading Oriental art centres in Czechoslovakia, the National Gallery and the Náprstek Museum in Prague. The Oriental Department of the National Gallery, headed by Lubor Hájek (born 1921), art historian and Indologist, has shared in the organisation of most of these exhibitions, besides systematically assembling collections of Indian art,

The popular team of Czechoslovak writers and film-makers M. Zikmund and J. Hanzelka, whose impressions of India during their round-the-world journey were keenly followed by hundreds of thousands of readers and cinema-goers.

Kamil Zvelebil's fluent Tamil is appreciated by Indian guests.

Erich Herold and Ivo Fišer at an exhibition of Folk-Painting from Orissa, inaugurated at the Náprstek Museum in the spring of 1967.

Oldřich Friš, the late Sanskrit scholar, in his library.

Vincenc Pořízka during one of his lectures on Hindi Grammar.

The Czechoslovak-Indian Society arranged in 1964
a series of lectures on Jawaharlal Nehru.
The opening meeting with Academician Jaroslav Průšek, Director of the Oriental Institute in the chair.

The India Club in Plzeň is doing a lot to foster Indo-Czechoslovak friendship.

At the invitation of the Czechoslovak-Indian Society, Prague was revisited by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee. He gave a talk at the Oriental Institute, with Dusan Zbavitel presiding.

President of Indian National Congress Kamaraj at his arrival in Prague in August 1966

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan as Vice-President of Indian Republic
during his visit in Czechoslovakia in 1956

Relief with a portrait of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan – work of the Czech artist V. A. Kovanič.

particularly of modern paintings, drawings and prints. The Director of the Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, Erich Herold (born 1928), formerly engaged in research in classical Indology, currently devotes great attention to completing the Museum's extensive stock of Indian works of art, representing mainly folk art and ethnography.

Apart from some comprehensive exhibitions (the first was arranged in 1955) acquainting visitors with a retrospective collection of original Old Indian sculptures, a series of north Indian miniatures and selections of the works of leading contemporary artists, many specialised exhibitions have been held in Prague and other cities. These included, for instance, an extensive display of Hindu temple sculptures (1954), applied art (1955), folk art and crafts (1958), ceramics (1962), reproductions of paintings by Rabindranath Tagore (1961), children's paintings (1964), Dakkhin, Mughal, Pahari and Rajput miniatures (1965), Orissa folk paintings (1967) and others.

Contemporary Indian art, known mainly from reproductions, has been exhibited in Prague at shows of Bhabesh Sanyal, Gade and some other artists. Ram Kumar acquainted Prague amateurs of art with his work at two exhibitions (1956 and 1967). In 1956 and 1967 pictures by Maqbool Fida Hussain were exhibited in Prague and a one-man show of the sculptures, drawings and prints of Ajit Chakravarti was held in 1961. The same year the works of Bishamber Khanna were publicly displayed, followed the next year by an exhibition of drawings, woodcuts and linocuts by B. Chittaprasad, in Prague and Bratislava (1963). In 1966 interest in modern Indian art led to the making of a colour film on the work of some contemporary painters (Samant, Hussain, Mehta and Balchhavda), directed by V. Kubenko.

Illustrations of books about India (original works and translations) are noted for their high artistic level. These are, to name but a few artists, works by C. Bouda, Z. Brychta, L. Jiřincová, H. Melicharová, M. Troup and M. Želibská. By their sensitive treatment of Indian themes these artists have considerably helped the readers to gain an insight into the literary and aesthetic qualities of many works of Indian literature.

The Czechoslovak public became early on acquainted with the best post-war productions of the Indian film industry. This was, in fact, due to the International Film Festivals held at Karlovy Vary, whence many Indian features found their way into other countries. Films by Satyajit Roy, K. A. Abbas, Bimal Roy, Rajkapoor and other directors were seen by hundreds of thousands of cinema-goers, and it cannot be denied that thanks to them, knowledge of Indian nature, the life of ordinary people of town and country, Indian customs, social conflicts and details of every-day life was greatly propagated. These films have, moreover, their intrinsic aesthetic values, which are necessary for a mutual confrontation of the two countries' ways of life and thinking and for a deeper understanding of a different culture. On the other hand, Czechoslovak film directors and camera operators have made dozens of documentaries and popular-scientific pictures on India and her cultural landmarks. Among these pride of place belongs to a medium-length, wide-screen colour film on Kashmir, called *If on Earth Be an Eden of Bliss ...*, possibly one of the best productions of this type to have been made so far. Along with many television films it was shot by the popular writers, M. Zikmund and J. Hanzelka, who visited India in the course of their round-the-world journey by car, and described their impressions of the country in an extensive travelogue.

Like the cinema, radio depends for its effectivity on its wide range and massive impact. Unlike the film's, however, its emotional qualities are enhanced by the privacy of the listener's home and feeling of seclusion. When, during the evaluation of Unesco's great East-West Project, the Czechoslovak Radio archives were investigated and statistics were compiled on programmes broadcast in the course of preceding years, it was found that programmes devoted to Indian culture had greatly exceeded those on the other parts of Asia and on Africa. This conclusion is certainly symptomatic of the popularity of Indian art in this country and of its impact on the whole cultural life. That this is so may, in part, be explained by the existence of a very fruitful agreement between Czechoslovak Radio and All-India Radio on programme exchanges. As a result, quality reccordings of Indian music, which are also used in literary broadcasts, are never in short supply.

First contacts were made among sportsmen, mainly tennis, table tennis and hockey players, cyclists and track and field athletes. Great interest was aroused by the visit to India of Czechoslovakia's Number One athlete, Emil Zátopek, and his wife Dana, the javelin thrower, in 1955–56; Zátopek discussed his impressions at many meetings after his return to Prague. There are possibilities of yet more contacts in future between mountain climbers.

The activities of the prewar Indian Association have been resumed by the Czechoslovak-Indian Society associating people interested in mutual relations between the two countries. It is the Society's ambition to serve as the basis of friendly social contacts between Indians and Czechs and Slovaks. It collaborates with many Indo-Czechoslovak friendship societies in New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and other cities, maintains close relations with the India Club run by

Indian trainees at the Škoda Works in Plzeň and the Indian Students Association in Czechoslovakia (founded in October 1966), organises cultural programmes on important Indian days and anniversaries, arranges competitions about India in the press and on television, besides working in a number of other ways for strengthening friendly ties.

Thus today there are very many ways leading to mutual contacts and friendship. Many more, in fact, than can be recorded in even the most detailed survey. Compared with the past, these ways are not only more numerous but far more concrete. Consequently they may not always be free of problems, but there is growing personal experience of one another which leads to much deeper mutual understanding. These friendly ties may well serve as an example, showing the prospects and benefits of peaceful cooperation. They are an integral part of, and an important link in, the historical process of drawing whole continents closer together, which has now been entered upon.

सत्यमेव जयते

PRAVDA VÍTĚZÍ

The same leading idea – TRUTH (ALONE) PREVAILS expressed in the State Emblem of India as well as on the Czechoslovak President's official flag.

POSTSCRIPT

A glance back at the changing image of India, as seen from Czechoslovakia, at our ancestors' first sources of information, at the many twists the story of India's "discovery" has taken, at the surprising wealth of contacts in the centuries-long development of the two countries, reveals a still wider scope and deeper significance. Many forgotten and newly discovered instances show us today ways in which the ageless dialogue between East and West originated and how man's desire to improve his knowledge by drawing upon the spiritual resources of even the most remote countries asserted itself. It is the story of how in these intercontinental relations the process of grasping the objective unity of mankind, its history and culture, finds fulfilment.

If, in our survey of the partial history and some problems of East-West contacts, we have shifted the centre of attention to the region known as Central Europe, which has so far received but little care in these considerations, we are aware that our efforts have added at most a fragment to the rich mosaic of historical relations between the two neighbouring continents of Asia and Europe. The mosaic, as we know well, is now in process of completion through discoveries of new and surprising points of contact in the historical development of the European South-East, East and North. And it seems that the symbolical controversy between Goethe's "East and West shall never more be divided" and Kipling's "East is East and West is West" is about to appear in a new light.

It is only natural to recall Tagore's deeply humanistic paraphrase: "East is East and West is West – God forbid that it were otherwise – but they both have to contact each other in peace, friendship and mutual understanding. Their meeting will be the more fruitful for all their differences and must lead them both to a sacred union before the Altar of

Humanity . . ." And it is impossible to disagree with Professor Winternitz who, as early as 1921, on the occasion of Tagore's first visit to Czechoslovakia, categorically stated with the conviction and matter-of-factness of a man of learning, that "East and West have never been separated. East and West will never be separated in the future".

History teaches us frequently how long and with what difficulties, yet how untiringly and irrepressibly, nations have been reaching out beyond the boundaries of continents and thought. Not always has the bridging of distances resulted in drawing peoples closer together. Today journeys have been reduced to a few flight hours and there has been a corresponding acceleration in the flow of historical events and revolutionary changes in the world and people themselves. What appeared to be fully satisfactory yesterday, is today nothing more than a mere stepping-stone to new discoveries and wider horizons. In Czechoslovakia, too, Indology has overcome its elementary philological bias. Although interest in Indian languages perseveres and readers are always looking forward to the publication of more new translations from Indian literatures, the manysided relations between the two countries during the last third of the twentieth century would be unthinkable without versatile and close study of all the diverse aspects of India's past and present. The Czechoslovak public is as interested in the Indian struggle for independence as in the consolidation of independence at the present day, in planning and industrialisation, as in agricultural reforms. The programmes of Indian political parties are being followed with as keen interest as are questions of linguistic and cultural policies, changes in religious institutions, problems of caste society, parliamentary debates and the foreign political orientation of the Republic of India.

All these and other questions are receiving the attention of the young generation of scholars at universities and research institutes. Bilateral plans of scientific and technical cooperation afford opportunities for more study and personal experience. Regular exchanges of strong teams of cultural workers are reflected in improved information of the public of both countries by the press, radio and television. The Czechoslovak people's image of India is rapidly acquiring new details and gaining clearer contours, in a word, it is coming closer to being the clear reflection of real life that is demanded by modern people living in a new age.

Yet even today knowledge of past traditions has not lost its significance. Rather it could be argued that the contrary is true. Indeed, the backward view can only inspire us to look forward to future encounters with justified hope.

Prague, 15th August, 1967

A COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY

India	Czechoslovakia
Palaeolithic Cultures	
circa 10 000 years B. C. Decline of Sohan Culture	circa 25 000 years B. C. Gravettian Culture of mammoth hunters. Venus of Věstonice
circa 3000 B. C. Beginnings of agricultural production. First metal casters	circa 3000 B. C. Transition to agricultural production
circa 2500 B. C. Formation of Harappa culture	
circa 1800 B. C. Penetration of Aryan tribes	circa 1700 B. C. Beginning of the Bronze Age. Únětice culture
circa 1000 B. C. The "Dark" Age	circa 1000 B. C. Lusatian culture
circa 700 B. C. Beginning of the Iron Age	
circa 500 B. C. Mahavira, Buddha	circa 500 B. C. Beginning of the Iron Age. Scythian nomads in Slovakia
circa 400 B. C. Bhagavad Gita composed	circa 400 B. C. Rise of the Culture of the Celts. The Celtic tribe of Boii gives name to Bohemia
327–325 B. C. Alexander's Indian campaign	

? 273–232 B. C.
The reign of Ashoka Maurya

circa 26–20 B. C.
Indian embassies to Augustus

78 (120)
Beginning of the reign of Kanishka, King of Kushans

circa 400
Chandragupta II
Kalidasa

606–647
Flowering of the Kanauj Empire under Harshavardhan's rule

711
Invasion of Sindh by Muhammad ibn Qasim

circa 836
Accession of Bhoja I. King of Kanauj

circa 1
Roman outposts north of the Danube
Teutonic tribes appear in Central Europe

400–500
Culture of the Great Migration Period

500–600
Slavonic tribes settle on the territory of Czechoslovakia

623–658
First Slavonic state in Central Europe (Samo's Empire)

circa 800
Origin of the Great Moravian Empire

863
Mission by the Byzantine brothers Constantine and Methodius. Beginning of Old Slav literature

	906 The Moravian Empire overthrown by Magyar tribes
circa 1000 The first invasion by Mahmud of Ghazni	995 Czech State unified
	1085 Vratislav I, the first king of Bohemia
1206 Foundation of Delhi Sultanate	1212 The Golden Bull of Sicily – Bohemia's independence recognised by the "Holy Roman Empire"
1221 First invasion by Mongol armies under Chingiz Khan	1241 Mongol invasion repulsed at the Bohemian boundary under Chingiz Khan's son Ogedei
	1269 Czech King Přemysl Otakar II advances the border of his kingdom to the Adriatic (including Forum Iulii, the birthplace of Odoricus of Pordenone, until 1276)
1336 Foundation of Vijayanagar Empire	1330 Odoricus Boemus of Pordenone returned from his journey to East Asia and India
	1348 Charles IV founded Prague University, the first university in Central Europe.

1354
Giovanni de Marignolli conceives in Prague his *Chronicle,* describing his impressions of India

1400
Invasion by Amir Timur. Decline of Delhi Sultanate

1400
Czech version of *Barlaam and Josaphat,* a legend based on Buddhist motives, by Thomas Štítný. Czech translation of Marco Polo's *Million*
First reports about Gipsies in Bohemia and Moravia

circa 1410
Czech translation of *Mandeville's Travels*

1420
Nicolo de Conti visits Vijayanagar

1415
John Hus, Rector of Prague University, religious and social reformer, burnt at the stake

1419–1437
Hussite revolutionary movement. J. Žižka, a popular leader, defeats Crusaders

1464
Proposals by George of Poděbrady, King of Bohemia, for peaceful coexistence of European nations and an international organisation

1469–1538
Guru Nanak, religious and social reformer

India	Bohemia
	1468 First Czech book printed
1498 Vasco da Gama lands on Indian shores	
	1507 First Czech version of the *Panchatantra* by Mikuláš Konáč of Hodiškov. Beginning of a century of Czech humanism
1526 First battle of Panipat. Babur founds the Great Mughal dynasty	1526 The Habsburgs ascend the Throne of Bohemia
1556–1605 Flowering of the Mughal Empire under Akbar the Great	1554 Extended Czech version of Münster's *Cosmographia*
? 1627–1680 Shivaji Rise of the Maratha Empire	
	1669 Beginning of wars with the Ottoman Empire in East and Central Europe
1707 Death of Aurangzeb. Decline of the Mughal Empire	
	1722 Foundation of the Ostend Company
1749–1760 Karel Přikryl in Goa	

1757
The Battle of Plassey
Beginning of British colonisation of India

1782–99
The reign of Sultan Tipu

1828
Raja Rammohan Roy founds Brahma Samaj

1839
Death of Ranjit Singh

1757
The Battle of Kolín (east of Prague) influences the initial stage of the Seven Years' War

1781
Abolition of serfdom
Beginning of Czech National Revival, renaissance of scientific and cultural life
Popular publications and articles on India

circa 1790
Scholar J. Dobrovský discovered affinities between Konkani and Slav languages after reading Přikryl's *Grammar*

1798
L. Bartolomeides's *Geograffia* published in Slovakia

circa 1800
Beginning of Industrial Revolution in Bohemia

1821
First scholarly works on India and Indian languages in Czech

1831
First book on Sanskrit by J. Š. Tamaško published in Slovakia

1848
Revolutionary upsurge and counter-revolution in Central Europe

	1849–60 Reversal to absolutism and a strict police regime
	1851 First Czech translation from Sanskrit published (*The Deluge* from Mahabharata, translated by A. Schleicher)
1853 First railway built	
1857–9 The Great Indian Uprising	
1863–83 Czech geologists Stolička and Feistmantel in India	1865 Telegraphic communication between Europe and India
1885 The Indian National Congress founded	1884 First Indian exhibition in Prague
1905–9 Upsurge of the national movement led by Tilak	1907 Upsurge of the democratic movement under the influence of Russian revolution
1909 Otakar Pertold becomes the first Czech Indologist to visit India	1914 First book of Tagore's poems published in Czech
1914–18 The Great War Indian servicemen on European battlefields	1914–18 The Great War

1918
Defeat of the Central Powers, disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy

Independent Czechoslovakia

1919–22
Fight for national liberation makes headway
M. K. Gandhi heads the Indian National Congress

1919
Czechoslovak Consulate established at Bombay

1921
First visit by R. Tagore

1922–3
V. Lesný and M. Winternitz at Shantiniketan

1926
Tagore's second visit

1927–8
V. Lesný for the second time in India

1930–3
New upsurge of the national liberation struggle

1934
Foundation of the Indian Association as part of the Oriental Institute in Prague

	1936 Indians studying in Europe meet in Prague
	1938 Visit by Jawaharlal Nehru. His energetic action in defence of Czechoslovak freedom and democracy
1938 The Munich Crisis	1938 The Munich Crisis
Resolution on Czechoslovakia passed by the Indian National Congress	
	1939 Occupation by Nazi Germany Beginning of resistance movement
1939 Outbreak of World War II	1939 Outbreak of World War II
	1942 Lidice destroyed
1943 Public collections for reconstruction of Lidice	
1945 End of World War II	1945 End of World War II. Liberation of Czechoslovakia. Indian delegation to the World Students Congress in Prague

1947
Indian independence won
Diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia established

1950
The proclamation of the Republic of India

1950
Introduction of Modern Indian languages as teaching subjects at Charles University in Prague

1955
State visit by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Prague

1956
Direct air connection between Bombay and Prague

1956
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan awarded a honorary doctor's degree at Charles University in Prague

1957
New Indo-Czechoslovak commercial agreement

1958
Czechoslovak Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on a state visit to India

1959
Signing of a cultural agreement at New Delhi

1959
Arrival of an Indian parliamentary delegation

1960
Czechoslovak parliamentary delegation in India

1960
A new commercial agreement signed in Prague

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1963
Signing of a long-term commercial and payments agreement

1964
The Foundry Forge Plant in Ranchi, built in cooperation with Czechoslovakia, started operation

1965
Czechoslovak Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, on a state visit to India

1965
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of the Republic of India, on a state visit to Czechoslovakia

1966
President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, on a state visit to India

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